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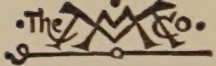
THE GOLDEN TREASURY OF MODERN LYRICS



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THE GOLDEN TREASURY

OF

MODERN LYRICS

SELECTED AND ARRANGED

BY

LAURENCE BINYON

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PREFACE

THE original Golden Treasury, first published in 1861, was designed to contain all the best songs and lyrics in our language up to the year 1850. The limitation, however, which excluded the work of writers still living in 1861, prevented any representation of the chief Victorian poets; and in effect the volume hardly carried the reader beyond the period which closed with the death of Byron in 1824, when Wordsworth and Coleridge, the great survivors of that period, had done their best work. The present volume is designed to continue the original Golden Treasury through the Victorian age to the present day, and in effect covers nearly a century. But it cannot make quite so comprehensive a claim as its predecessor. Even in the case of work which has been sifted by time a wide diversity of opinion, as to what is best, persists: the diversity is accentuated the nearer we approach to contemporaries. To present "all the best poems" written in English during the period is an ambition for the infallible. But apart

from other difficulties the amplitude of the material and the prescribed limitation of space made the comprehensiveness of such an aim impossible. No attempt has been made to represent the whole range of English-speaking writers. To have included selections from the poets of the Overseas Dominions and from Indian poets using our language—to say nothing of the poetry of America—would have increased the material beyond manageable scope. Even with these limitations I have been obliged to omit a number of beautiful poems from mere considerations of space. A few are absent for other causes beyond my control.

The difficulties and dangers of choosing from recent and contemporary verse are obvious. Some pieces which should have found a place may have been overlooked; the right things may have been read in the wrong mood; mistakes of judgement are probably inevitable. But he who is rash enough to undertake such a task must bear the responsibility as best he may. The inordinate length of some of the lyrics produced during the period has been an additional difficulty. In a few cases I have ventured, like Mr. Palgrave, to compress or extract: all such instances are recorded in the Notes.

The death of Tennyson closed an epoch in our poetry. It seemed best, therefore, in presenting

a book of lyrics often so different in mood and atmosphere, to divide the selection into two books, corresponding roughly with the periods before and after that date. But no precise dividing line has been chosen: overlapping is unavoidable; harmony and convenience of arrangement have determined the choice in doubtful cases.

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BOOK I

I

THE PHOENIX

O BLEST unfabled Incense Tree,
That burns in glorious Araby,
With red scent chalicing the air,
Till earth-life grow Elysian there!

Half buried to her flaming breast
In this bright tree, she makes her nest,
Hundred-sunned Phoenix! when she must
Crumble at length to hoary dust!

Her gorgeous death-bed! her rich pyre
Burnt up with aromatic fire!
Her urn, sight-high from spoiler men!
Her birthplace when self-born again!

The mountainless green wilds among,
Here ends she her unechoing song!
With amber tears and odorous sighs
Mourned by the desert where she dies!

George Darley.

II

A GARDEN BY THE SEA

I KNOW a little garden-close,
Set thick with lily and red rose,
Where I would wander if I might
From dewy morn to dewy night,
And have one with me wandering.

And though within it no birds sing,
And though no pillared house is there,
And though the apple-boughs are bare
Of fruit and blossom, would to God
Her feet upon the green grass trod,
And I beheld them as before.

There comes a murmur from the shore,
And in the close two fair streams are,
Drawn from the purple hills afar,
Drawn down unto the restless sea:
Dark hills whose heath-bloom feeds no bee,
Dark shore no ship has ever seen,
Tormented by the billows green
Whose murmur comes unceasingly
Unto the place for which I cry.
For which I cry both day and night,
For which I let slip all delight,
Whereby I grow both deaf and blind,
Careless to win, unskilled to find,
And quick to lose what all men seek.

Yet tottering as I am and weak,
Still have I left a little breath
To seek within the jaws of death
An entrance to that happy place,
To seek the unforgotten face,
Once seen, once kissed, once reft from me
Anigh the murmuring of the sea.

William Morris.

III

TO FANCY

I AM here for thee,
Art thou there for me?
Or, traitress to my watchful heart,
Dost thou from rock and wave depart,
And from the desolate sea?

I am here for thee,
Art thou there for me?
Or, Fancy, with thy wondrous smile
Wilt thou no more my eyes beguile
Betwixt the clouds and sea?

I am here for thee,
Art thou there for me?
Spirit of brightness, shy and sweet!
My eyes thy glimmering robe would meet
Above the glimmering sea.

My little skill,
My passionate will
Are here: where art thou? Spirit, bow
From darkening cloud thy heavenly brow,
Ere sinks the ebbing sea.

Richard Watson Dixon.

IV

SPEAK, GOD OF VISIONS

O, THY bright eyes must answer now,
When Reason, with a scornful brow,
Is mocking at my overthrow!
Oh, thy sweet tongue must plead for me
And tell why I have chosen thee!

Stern Reason is to judgment come,
Arrayed in all her forms of gloom:
Wilt thou, my advocate, be dumb?
No, radiant angel, speak and say,
Why I did cast the world away.—

Why I have persevered to shun
The common paths that others run,
And on a strange road journeyed on,
Heedless alike of wealth and power,
Of Glory's wreath and Pleasure's flower.

These once, indeed, seemed Beings Divine;
And they, perchance, heard vows of mine,
And saw my offerings on their shrine;
But careless gifts are seldom prized,
And mine were worthily despised.

So, with a ready heart, I swore
To seek their altar-stone no more;
And gave my spirit to adore
Thee, ever-present, phantom thing—
My slave, my comrade, and my king.

A slave, because I rule thee still,
Incline thee to my changeful will,
And make thy influence, good or ill:
A comrade, for by day and night
Thou art my intimate delight,—

My darling pain that wounds and sears,
And wrings a blessing out from tears
By deadening me to earthly cares;
And yet, a king, though Prudence well
Have taught thy subject to rebel.

And am I wrong to worship where
Faith cannot doubt, nor Hope despair,
Since my own soul can grant my prayer?
Speak, God of visions, plead for me,
And tell why I have chosen thee!

Emily Brontë.

V

THE VOICE

As the kindling glances,
  Queen-like and clear,
Which the bright moon lances
  From her tranquil sphere

At the sleepless waters
Of a lonely mere,
On the wild whirling waves, mournfully, mournfully,
Shiver and die.

As the tears of sorrow
Mothers have shed—
Prayers that to-morrow
Shall in vain be sped
When the flower they flow for
Lies frozen and dead—
Fall on the throbbing brow, fall on the burning breast,
Bringing no rest.

Like bright waves that fall
With a lifelike motion
On the lifeless margin of the sparkling Ocean;
A wild rose climbing up a mouldering wall—
A gush of sunbeams through a ruin'd hall—
Strains of glad music at a funeral—
So sad, and with so wild a start
To this deep-sober'd heart,
So anxiously and painfully,
So drearily and doubtfully,
And oh, with such intolerable change
Of thought, such contrast strange,
O unforgotten voice, thy accents come,
Like wanderers from the world's extremity,
Unto their ancient home!

In vain, all, all in vain,
They beat upon mine ear again,
Those melancholy tones so sweet and still.
Those lute-like tones which in the bygone year
Did steal into mine ear—
Blew such a thrilling summons to my will,
Yet could not shake it;
Made my tost heart its very life-blood spill,
Yet could not break it.

Matthew Arnold.

VI

SIBYLLA PALMIFERA

Under the arch of Life, where love and death,
Terror and mystery, guard her shrine, I saw
Beauty enthroned; and though her gaze struck awe,
I drew it in as simply as my breath.
Hers are the eyes which, over and beneath,
The sky and sea bend on thee,—which can draw,
By sea or sky or woman, to one law,
The allotted bondman of her palm and wreath.

This is that Lady Beauty, in whose praise
Thy voice and hand shake still,—long known to thee
By flying hair and fluttering hem,—the beat
Following her daily of thy heart and feet,
How passionately and irretrievably,
In what fond flight, how many ways and days!

Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

VII

SONG IN THE SONGLESS

THEY have no song, the sedges dry,
  And still they sing.
It is within my breast they sing,
  As I pass by.
Within my breast they touch a string,
  They wake a sigh.
There is but sound of sedges dry;
  In me they sing.

George Meredith.

VIII

A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT

WHAT was he doing, the great god Pan,
  Down in the reeds by the river?
Spreading ruin and scattering ban,
Splashing and paddling with hoofs of a goat,
And breaking the golden lilies afloat
  With the dragon-fly on the river.

He tore out a reed, the great god Pan,
  From the deep cool bed of the river:
The limpid water turbidly ran,
And the broken lilies a-dying lay,
And the dragon-fly had fled away,
  Ere he brought it out of the river.

High on the shore sate the great god Pan,
While turbidly flowed the river;
And hacked and hewed as a great god can,
With his hard bleak steel at the patient reed,
Till there was not a sign of a leaf indeed
To prove it fresh from the river.

He cut it short, did the great god Pan
(How tall it stood in the river!)
Then drew the pith, like the heart of a man,
Steadily from the outside ring,
And notched the poor dry empty thing
In holes, as he sate by the river.

"This is the way," laughed the great god Pan
(Laughed while he sate by the river),
"The only way, since gods began
To make sweet music, they could succeed."
Then, dropping his mouth to a hole in the reed
He blew in power by the river.

Sweet, sweet, sweet, O Pan!
Piercing sweet by the river!
Blinding sweet, O great god Pan!
The sun on the hill forgot to die,
And the lilies revived, and the dragon-fly
Came back to dream on the river.

Yet half a beast is the great god Pan,
To laugh as he sits by the river,
Making a poet out of a man:
The true gods sigh for the cost and pain,—
For the reed which grows nevermore again
As a reed with the reeds in the river.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

IX

THE LOTOS-EATERS: CHORIC SONG

1

THERE is sweet music here that softer falls
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
Or night-dews on still waters between walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,
Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes;
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful skies.
Here are cool mosses deep,
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

2

Why are we weigh'd upon with heaviness,
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,
While all things else have rest from weariness?
All things have rest: why should we toil alone,
We only toil, who are the first of things,
And make perpetual moan,
Still from one sorrow to another thrown:
Nor ever fold our wings,
And cease from wanderings,

Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm;
Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,
"There is no joy but calm!"
Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things?

3

Lo! in the middle of the wood,
The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud
With winds upon the branch, and there
Grows green and broad, and takes no care,
Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon
Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow
Falls, and floats adown the air.
Lo! sweeten'd with the summer light,
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,
Drops in a silent autumn night.
All its allotted length of days,
The flower ripens in its place,
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

4

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.
Death is the end of life; ah, why
Should life all labour be?
Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
And in a little while our lips are dumb.
Let us alone. What is it that will last?
All things are taken from us, and become
Portions and parcels of the dreadful Past.

Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
To war with evil? Is there any peace
In ever climbing up the climbing wave?
All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave
In silence; ripen, fall and cease:
Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful ease.

5

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,
With half-shut eyes ever to seem
Falling asleep in a half-dream!
To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height;
To hear each other's whisper'd speech;
Eating the Lotos day by day,
To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,
And tender curving lines of creamy spray;
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
To the influence of mild-minded melancholy;
To muse and brood and live again in memory,
With those old faces of our infancy
Heap'd over with a mound of grass,
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass!

6

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,
And dear the last embraces of our wives
And their warm tears: but all hath suffer'd change:
For surely now our household hearts are cold:
Our sons inherit us: our looks are strange:
And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.

Or else the island princes over-bold
Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings
Before them of the ten years' war in Troy,
And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.
Is there confusion in the little isle?
Let what is broken so remain.
The Gods are hard to reconcile:
'Tis hard to settle order once again.
There *is* confusion worse than death,
Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
Long labour unto aged breath,
Sore task to hearts worn out by many wars
And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-stars.

7

But, propt on beds of amaranth and moly,
How sweet (while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly)
With half-dropt eyelid still,
Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
To watch the long bright river drawing slowly
His waters from the purple hill—
To hear the dewy echoes calling
From cave to cave thro' the thick-twined vine—
To watch the emerald-colour'd water falling
Thro' many a wov'n acanthus-wreath divine!
Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,
Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out beneath the pine.

8

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak:
The Lotos blows by every winding creek:

All day the wind breathes low with mellower tone;
Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone
Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotos-dust is blown.
We have had enough of action, and of motion we,
Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard, when the surge was seething free,
Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-fountains in the sea.
Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,
In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined
On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind.
For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are hurl'd
Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are lightly curl'd
Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming world:
Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring deeps and fiery sands,
Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships, and praying hands.
But they smile, they find a music centred in a doleful song
Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of wrong,
Like a tale of little meaning tho' the words are strong;

Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave
the soil,
Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring
toil,
Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and
oil;
Till they perish and they suffer — some, 'tis
whisper'd—down in hell
Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys
dwell,
Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel.
Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the shore
Than labour in the deep mid-ocean, wind and
wave and oar;
Oh rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander
more.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

X

DAVID SINGS TO SAUL

Oh, the wild joys of living! the leaping from rock
up to rock,
The strong rending of boughs from the fir-tree,
the cool silver shock
Of the plunge in a pool's living water, the hunt
of the bear,
And the sultriness showing the lion is couched in
his lair.

And the meal, the rich dates yellowed over with
gold dust divine,
And the locust-flesh steeped in the pitcher, the
full draught of wine,
And the sleep in the dried river-channel where
bulrushes tell
That the water was wont to go warbling so softly
and well.
How good is man's life, the mere living! how fit
to employ
All the heart and the soul and the senses for
ever in joy!
Hast thou loved the white locks of thy father,
whose sword thou didst guard
When he trusted thee forth with the armies, for
glorious reward?
Didst thou see the thin hands of thy mother, held
up as men sung
The low song of the nearly-departed, and hear
her faint tongue
Joining in while it could to the witness, "Let one
more attest,
I have lived, seen God's hand thro' a lifetime, and
all was for best"?
Then they sung thro' their tears in strong tri-
umph, not much, but the rest.
And thy brothers, the help and the contest, the
working whence grew
Such result as, from seething grape-bundles, the
spirit strained true:
And the friends of thy boyhood—that boyhood of
wonder and hope,

Present promise and wealth of the future beyond
the eye's scope,—
Till lo, thou art grown to a monarch; a people is
thine;
And all gifts, which the world offers singly, on
one head combine!
On one head, all the beauty and strength, love and
rage (like the throe
That, a-work in the rock, helps its labour and
lets the gold go),
High ambition and deeds which surpass it, fame
crowning them,—all
Brought to blaze on the head of one creature—
King Saul!

Robert Browning.

XI

Often rebuked, yet always back returning
To those first feelings that were born with me,
And leaving busy chase of wealth and learning
For idle dreams of things which cannot be;

To-day, I will not seek the shadowy region;
Its unsustaining vastness waxes drear;
And visions rising, legion after legion,
Bring the unreal world too strangely near.

I'll walk, but not in old heroic traces,
And not in paths of high morality,
And not among the half-distinguished faces,
The clouded forms of long-past history.

I'll walk where my own nature would be leading:
It vexes me to choose another guide:
Where the gray flocks in ferny glens are feeding;
Where the wild wind blows on the mountain side.

What have those lonely mountains worth revealing?
More glory and more grief than I can tell:
The earth that wakes one human heart to feeling
Can centre both the worlds of Heaven and Hell.

Emily Brontë.

XII

THE SHEPHERD'S TREE

Huge elm, with rifted trunk all notched and scarred,
Like to a warrior's destiny! I love
To stretch me often on thy shadowed sward,
And hear the laugh of summer leaves above;
Or on thy buttressed roots to sit, and lean
In careless attitude, and there reflect
On times, and deeds, and darings that have been—
Old castaways, now swallowed in neglect,

While thou art towering in thy strength of heart,
Stirring the soul to vain imaginings
In which life's sordid being hath no part.
The wind of that eternal ditty sings,
Humming of future things, that burn the mind
To leave some fragment of itself behind.

John Clare.

XIII

THE VENETIAN PASTORAL:

A Picture by Giorgione

Water, for anguish of the solstice:—nay,
But dip the vessel slowly,—nay, but lean
And hark how at its verge the wave sighs in
Reluctant. Hush! beyond all depth away
The heat lies silent at the brink of day:
Now the hand trails upon the viol-string
That sobs, and the brown faces cease to sing,
Sad with the whole of pleasure. Whither stray
Her eyes now, from whose mouth the slim pipes
creep
And leave it pouting, while the shadowed grass
Is cool against her naked side? Let be:—
Say nothing now unto her lest she weep,
Nor name this ever. Be it as it was,—
Life touching lips with Immortality.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

XIV

A SONG OF FLIGHT

While we slumber and sleep
The sun leaps up from the deep
—Daylight born at the leap!—
Rapid, dominant, free,
Athirst to bathe in the uttermost sea.

While we linger at play
—If the year would stand at May!—
Winds are up and away
Over land, over sea,
To their goal wherever their goal may be.

It is time to arise,
To race for the promised prize,
—The Sun flies, the Wind flies—
We are strong, we are free,
And home lies beyond the stars and the sea.

Christina Rossetti.

XV

The splendour falls on castle walls
And snowy summits old in story:
The long light shakes across the lakes,
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,
And thinner, clearer, farther going!
O sweet and far from cliff and scar
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying:
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
They faint on hill or field or river:

Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
And grow for ever and for ever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

XVI

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN

Come, dear children, let us away;
Down and away below!
Now my brothers call from the bay,
Now the great winds shoreward blow,
Now the salt tides seaward flow;
Now the wild white horses play,
Champ and chafe and toss in the spray.
Children dear, let us away!
This way, this way!

Call her once before you go—
Call once yet!
In a voice that she will know:
"Margaret! Margaret!"
Children's voices should be dear
(Call once more) to a mother's ear;
Children's voices, wild with pain—
Surely she will come again!
Call her once and come away;
This way, this way!
"Mother dear, we cannot stay!
The wild white horses foam and fret."
Margaret! Margaret!

Come, dear children, come away down;
Call no more!
One last look at the white-wall'd town,
And the little grey church on the windy shore;
Then come down!
She will not come though you call all day;
Come away, come away!

Children dear, was it yesterday
We heard the sweet bells over the bay?
In the caverns where we lay,
Through the surf and through the swell,
The far-off sound of a silver bell?
Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep,
Where the winds are all asleep;
Where the spent lights quiver and gleam,
Where the salt weed sways in the stream,
Where the sea-beasts, ranged all around,
Feed in the ooze of their pasture-ground;
Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,
Dry their mail and bask in the brine;
Where great whales come sailing by,
Sail and sail, with unshut eye,
Round the world for ever and aye?
When did music come this way?
Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, was it yesterday
(Call yet once) that she went away?
Once she sate with you and me,
On a red gold throne in the heart of the sea,
And the youngest sate on her knee.

She comb'd its bright hair, and she tended it well,
When down swung the sound of a far-off bell.
She sigh'd, she look'd up through the clear green sea;
She said: "I must go, for my kinsfolk pray
In the little grey church on the shore to-day.
'Twill be Easter-time in the world—ah me!
And I lose my poor soul, Merman! here with thee."
I said: "Go up, dear heart, through the waves;
Say thy prayer, and come back to the kind sea-caves!"
She smiled, she went up through the surf in the bay.
Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, were we long alone?
"The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan;
Long prayers," I said, "in the world they say;
Come!" I said; and we rose through the surf in the bay.
We went up the beach, by the sandy down
Where the sea-stocks bloom, to the white-wall'd town;
Through the narrow paved streets, where all was still,
To the little grey church on the windy hill.
From the church came a murmur of folk at their prayers,
But we stood without in the cold blowing airs.
We climb'd on the graves, on the stones worn with rains,
And we gazed up the aisle through the small leaded panes.

She sate by the pillar; we saw her clear:
"Margaret, hist! come quick, we are here!
Dear heart," I said, " we are long alone;
The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan."
But, ah, she gave me never a look,
For her eyes were seal'd to the holy book!
Loud prays the priest; shut stands the door.
Come away, children, call no more!
Come away, come down, call no more!

Down, down, down!
Down to the depths of the sea!
She sits at her wheel in the humming town,
Singing most joyfully.
Hark what she sings: "O joy, O joy,
For the humming street, and the child with its toy!
For the priest, and the bell, and the holy well;
For the wheel where I spun,
And the blessed light of the sun!"
And so she sings her fill,
Singing most joyfully,
Till the spindle drops from her hand,
And the whizzing wheel stands still.
She steals to the window, and looks at the sand,
And over the sand at the sea;
And her eyes are set in a stare;
And anon there breaks a sigh,
And anon there drops a tear,
From a sorrow-clouded eye,
And a heart sorrow-laden,
A long, long sigh;
For the cold strange eyes of a little Mermaiden
And the gleam of her golden hair.

Come away, away children;
Come children, come down!
The hoarse wind blows coldly;
Lights shine in the town.
She will start from her slumber
When gusts shake the door;
She will hear the winds howling,
Will hear the waves roar.
We shall see, while above us
The waves roar and whirl,
A ceiling of amber,
A pavement of pearl,
Singing: "Here came a mortal,
But faithless was she!
And alone dwell for ever
The kings of the sea."

But, children, at midnight,
When soft the winds blow,
When clear falls the moonlight,
When spring-tides are low;
When sweet airs come seaward
From heaths starr'd with broom,
And high rocks throw mildly
On the blanch'd sands a gloom;
Up the still, glistening beaches,
Up the creeks we will hie,
Over banks of bright seaweed
The ebb-tide leaves dry.
We will gaze, from the sand-hills,
At the white, sleeping town;
At the church on the hill-side—
And then come back down,

Singing: "There dwells a loved one,
But cruel is she!
She left lonely for ever
The kings of the sea."

Matthew Arnold.

XVII

THE LADY OF SHALOTT

Part I

On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
And thro' the field the road runs by
To many-tower'd Camelot;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Thro' the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot.
Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,
Slide the heavy barges trail'd
By slow horses; and unhail'd
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd
Skimming down to Camelot:
But who hath seen her wave her hand?
Or at the casement seen her stand?
Or is she known in all the land,
The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly,
Down to tower'd Camelot:
And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers "'Tis the fairy
Lady of Shalott."

Part II

There she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colours gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay
To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
The Lady of Shalott.

Albion College Library

And moving thro' a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
Winding down to Camelot:
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls,
Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
Goes by to tower'd Camelot;
And sometimes thro' the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two:
She hath no loyal knight and true,
The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often thro' the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights
And music, went to Camelot:
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed;
"I am half sick of shadows," said
The Lady of Shalott.

Part III

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley-sheaves,
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
Of bold Sir Lancelot.
A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field,
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.
The bridle bells rang merrily
As he rode down to Camelot:
And from his blazon'd baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armour rung,
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burn'd like one burning flame together,
As he rode down to Camelot.
As often thro' the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd;
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode;
From underneath his helmet flow'd
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river
He flash'd into the crystal mirror,
"Tirra lirra," by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces thro' the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She look'd down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror crack'd from side to side;
"The curse is come upon me," cried
The Lady of Shalott.

Part IV

In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining,
Heavily the low sky raining
Over tower'd Camelot;
Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse
Like some bold seër in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance—
With a glassy countenance
Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she lay;
The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right—
The leaves upon her falling light—
Thro' the noises of the night
She floated down to Camelot:
And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darken'd wholly,
Turn'd to tower'd Camelot.
For ere she reach'd upon the tide
The first house by the water-side
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,

A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
Silent into Camelot.
Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her name,
The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer;
And they cross'd themselves for fear,
All the knights at Camelot:
But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said, "She has a lovely face;
God in his mercy lend her grace,
The Lady of Shalott."

Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

XVIII

THE LABORATORY: *ANCIEN RÉGIME*

Now that I, tying thy glass mask tightly,
May gaze thro' these faint smokes curling whitely,
As thou pliest thy trade in this devil's-smithy—
Which is the poison to poison her, prithee?

He is with her, and they know that I know
Where they are, what they do: they believe my
tears flow

While they laugh, laugh at me, at me fled to the
drear
Empty church, to pray God in, for them!—I am
here.

Grind away, moisten and mash up thy paste,
Pound at thy powder,—I am not in haste!
Better sit thus, and observe thy strange things,
Than go where men wait me and dance at the
King's.

That in the mortar—you call it a gum?
Ah, the brave tree whence such gold oozings come!
And yonder soft phial, the exquisite blue,
Sure to taste sweetly,—is that poison too?

Had I but all of them, thee and thy treasures,
What a wild crowd of invisible pleasures!
To carry pure death in an ear-ring, a casket,
A signet, a fan-mount, a filigree basket!

Soon, at the King's, a mere lozenge to give,
And Pauline should have just thirty minutes to
live!
But to light a pastille, and Elise, with her head
And her breast and her arms and her hands,
should drop dead!

Quick—is it finished? The colour's too grim!
Why not soft like the phial's, enticing and dim?
Let it brighten her drink, let her turn it and stir,
And try it and taste, ere she fix and prefer!

What a drop! She's not little, no minion like me!
That's why she ensnared him: this never will free
The soul from those masculine eyes,—say, "No!"
To that pulse's magnificent come-and-go.

For only last night, as they whispered, I brought
My own eyes to bear on her so, that I thought
Could I keep them one half minute fixed, she would fall
Shrivelled; she fell not; yet this does it all!

Not that I bid you spare her the pain;
Let death be felt and the proof remain;
Brand, burn up, bite into its grace—
He is sure to remember her dying face!

Is it done? Take my mask off! Nay, be not morose;
It kills her, and this prevents seeing it close:
The delicate droplet, my whole fortune's fee!
If it hurts her, beside, can it ever hurt me?

Now, take all my jewels, gorge gold to your fill,
You may kiss me, old man, on my mouth if you will!
But brush this dust off me, lest horror it brings
Ere I know it—next moment I dance at the King's!

Robert Browning.

XIX

AMATURUS

SOMEWHERE beneath the sun,
  These quivering heart-strings prove it,
Somewhere there must be one
  Made for this soul, to move it;
Some one that hides her sweetness
  From neighbours whom she slights,
Nor can attain completeness,
  Nor give her heart its rights;
Some one whom I could court
  With no great change of manner,
Still holding reason's fort,
  Though waving fancy's banner;
A lady, not so queenly
  As to disdain my hand,
Yet born to smile serenely
  Like those that rule the land;
Noble, but not too proud;
  With soft hair simply folded,
And bright face crescent-browed,
  And throat by Muses moulded;
And eyelids lightly falling
  On little glistening seas,
Deep-calm, when gales are brawling,
  Though stirred by every breeze:
Swift voice, like flight of dove
  Through minster arches floating,
With sudden turns, when love
  Gets overnear to doting;

Keen lips, that shape soft sayings
  Like crystals of the snow,
With pretty half-betrayings
  Of things one may not know;
Fair hand, whose touches thrill,
  Like golden rod of wonder,
Which Hermes wields at will
  Spirit and flesh to sunder;
Light foot, to press the stirrup
  In fearlessness and glee,
Or dance, till finches chirrup,
  And stars sink to the sea.

Forth, Love, and find this maid,
  Wherever she be hidden:
Speak, Love, be not afraid,
  But plead as thou art bidden;
And say, that he who taught thee
  His yearning want and pain,
Too dearly, dearly bought thee
  To part with thee in vain.

William Cory.

XX

SAINT VALENTINE'S DAY

WELL dost thou, Love, thy solemn Feast to hold
In vestal February;
Not rather choosing out some rosy day
From the rich coronet of the coming May,
When all things meet to marry!
  O quick, prævernal Power

That signall'st punctual through the sleepy mould
The Snowdrop's time to flower,
Fair as the rash oath of virginity
Which is first-love's first cry;
O, Baby spring,
That flutter'st sudden 'neath the breast of Earth
A month before the birth;
Whence is the peaceful poignancy,
The joy contrite,
Sadder than sorrow, sweeter than delight,
That burthens now the breath of everything,
Though each one sighs as if to each alone
The cherish'd pang were known?
At dusk of dawn, on his dark spray apart,
With it the Blackbird breaks the young Day's heart;
In evening's hush
About it talks the heavenly-minded Thrush;
The hill with like remorse
Smiles to the Sun's smile in his westering course;
The fisher's drooping skiff
In yonder sheltering bay;
The choughs that call about the shining cliff;
The children, noisy in the setting ray;
Own the sweet season, each thing as it may;
Thoughts of strange kindness and forgotten peace
In me increase;
And tears arise
Within my happy, happy Mistress' eyes,
And, lo, her lips, averted from my kiss,
Ask from Love's bounty, ah, much more than bliss!
Is't the sequester'd and exceeding sweet
Of dear Desire electing his defeat?

Is't the waked Earth now to yon purpling cope
Uttering first-love's first cry,
Vainly renouncing, with a seraph's sigh,
Love's natural hope?
Fair-meaning Earth, foredoom'd to perjury!
Behold, all amorous May,
With roses heap'd upon her laughing brows,
Avoids thee of thy vows!
Were it for thee, with her warm bosom near,
To abide the sharpness of the Seraph's sphere?
Forget thy foolish words;
Go to her summons gay,
Thy heart with dead, wing'd Innocencies fill'd,
Ev'n as a nest with birds
After the old ones by the hawk are kill'd.
  Well dost thou, Love, to celebrate
The noon of thy soft ecstasy,
Or e'er it be too late,
Or e'er the Snowdrop die!

Coventry Patmore.

XXI

DREAM-LOVE

Young Love lies sleeping
  In May-time of the year,
Among the lilies,
  Lapped in the tender light:
White lambs come grazing,
  White doves come building there:
And round about him
  The May-bushes are white.

Soft moss the pillow
  For oh, a softer cheek;
Broad leaves cast shadow
  Upon the heavy eyes:
There wind and waters
  Grow lulled and scarcely speak;
There twilight lingers
  The longest in the skies.

Young Love lies dreaming;
  But who shall tell the dream?
A perfect sunlight
  On rustling forest tips;
Or perfect moonlight
  Upon a rippling stream;
Or perfect silence,
  Or song of cherished lips.

Burn odours round him
  To fill the drowsy air;
Weave silent dances
  Around him to and fro;
For oh, in waking
  The sights are not so fair,
And song and silence
  Are not like these below.

Young Love lies dreaming
  Till summer days are gone,—
Dreaming and drowsing
  Away to perfect sleep:

He sees the beauty
  Sun hath not looked upon,
And tastes the fountain
  Unutterably deep.

Him perfect music
  Doth hush unto his rest,
And through the pauses
  The perfect silence calms:
Oh, poor the voices
  Of earth from east to west,
And poor earth's stillness
  Between her stately palms.

Young Love lies drowsing
  Away to poppied death;
Cool shadows deepen
  Across the sleeping face:
So fails the summer
  With warm, delicious breath;
And what hath autumn
  To give us in its place?

Draw close the curtains
  Of branched evergreen;
Change cannot touch them
  With fading fingers sere:
Here first the violets
  Perhaps will bud unseen,
And a dove, may be,
  Return to nestle here.

Christina Rossetti.

XXII

SUMMUM BONUM

All the breath and the bloom of the year in the bag of one bee:
All the wonder and wealth of the mine in the heart of one gem:
In the core of one pearl all the shade and the shine of the sea:
Breath and bloom, shade and shine, wonder, wealth, and—how far above them—
Truth, that's brighter than gem,
Trust, that's purer than pearl,—
Brightest truth, purest trust in the universe—all were for me
In the kiss of one girl.

Robert Browning.

XXIII

THE HUNTSMEN'S CHORUS

When the hounds of spring are on winter's traces,
The mother of months in meadow or plain
Fills the shadows and windy places
With lisp of leaves and ripple of rain;
And the brown bright nightingale amorous
Is half assuaged for Itylus,
For the Thracian ships and the foreign faces,
The tongueless vigil, and all the pain.

Come with bows bent and with emptying of quivers,
  Maiden most perfect, lady of light,
With a noise of winds and many rivers,
  With a clamour of waters, and with might;
Bind on thy sandals, O thou most fleet,
Over the splendour and speed of thy feet;
For the faint east quickens, the wan west shivers,
  Round the feet of the day and the feet of the night.

Where shall we find her, how shall we sing to her,
  Fold our hands round her knees, and cling?
O that man's heart were as fire and could spring to her,
  Fire, or the strength of the streams that spring!
For the stars and the winds are unto her
As raiment, as songs of the harp-player;
For the risen stars and the fallen cling to her,
  And the southwest-wind and the west-wind sing.

For winter's rains and ruins are over,
  And all the season of snows and sins;
The days dividing lover and lover,
  The light that loses, the night that wins;
And time remembered is grief forgotten,
And frosts are slain and flowers begotten,
And in green underwood and cover
  Blossom by blossom the spring begins.

The full streams feed on flower of rushes,
  Ripe grasses trammel a travelling foot,
The faint fresh flame of the young year flushes
  From leaf to flower and flower to fruit;

And fruit and leaf are as gold and fire,
And the oat is heard above the lyre,
And the hoofèd heel of a satyr crushes
The chestnut-husk at the chestnut-root.

And Pan by noon and Bacchus by night,
Fleeter of foot than the fleet-foot kid,
Follows with dancing and fills with delight
The Mænad and the Bassarid;
And soft as lips that laugh and hide
The laughing leaves of the trees divide,
And screen from seeing and leave in sight
The god pursuing, the maiden hid.

The ivy falls with the Bacchanal's hair
Over her eyebrows hiding her eyes;
The wild vine slipping down leaves bare
Her bright breast shortening into sighs;
The wild vine slips with the weight of its leaves,
But the berried ivy catches and cleaves
To the limbs that glitter, the feet that scare
The wolf that follows, the fawn that flies.

Algernon Charles Swinburne.

XXIV

ECHOES OF LOVE'S HOUSE

Love gives every gift, whereby we long to live:
"Love takes every gift, and nothing back doth give."

Love unlocks the lips that else were ever dumb:
"Love locks up the lips whence all things good might come."

Love makes clear the eyes that else would never see:
"Love makes blind the eyes to all but me and thee."

Love turns life to joy till nought is left to gain:
"Love turns life to woe till hope is nought and vain."

Love, who changest all, change me nevermore!
"Love, who changest all, change my sorrow sore!"

Love burns up the world to changeless heaven and blest,
"Love burns up the world to a void of all unrest."

And there we twain are left, and no more work we need:
"And I am left alone, and who my work shall heed?"

Ah! I praise thee, Love, for utter joyance won!
"And is my praise nought worth for all my life undone?"

William Morris.

XXV

HER HEAVEN

If to grow old in Heaven is to grow young,
(As the Seer saw and said), then blest were he
With youth for evermore, whose heaven should be
True Woman, she whom these weak notes have sung.
Here and hereafter,—choir-strains of her tongue—
Sky-spaces of her eyes,—sweet signs that flee
About her soul's immediate sanctuary,—
Were Paradise all uttermost worlds among.

The sunrise blooms and withers on the hill
Like any hillflower; and the noblest troth
Dies here to dust. Yet shall Heaven's promise clothe
Even yet those lovers who have cherished still
This test for love:—in every kiss sealed fast
To feel the first kiss and forebode the last.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

XXVI

THE NEW LOVE AND THE OLD

I made another garden, yea,
For my new Love:
I left the dead rose where it lay
And set the new above.

Why did my Summer not begin?
  Why did my heart not haste?
My old Love came and walk'd therein,
  And laid the garden waste.

She enter'd with her weary smile,
  Just as of old;
She look'd around a little while
  And shiver'd with the cold:
Her passing touch was death to all,
  Her passing look a blight;
She made the white rose-petals fall,
  And turn'd the red rose white.

Her pale robe clinging to the grass
  Seem'd like a snake
That bit the grass and ground, alas!
  And a sad trail did make.
She went up slowly to the gate,
  And then, just as of yore,
She turn'd back at the last to wait
  And say farewell once more.

Arthur O'Shaughnessy.

XXVII

MARIAN

She can be as wise as we,
And wiser when she wishes;
She can knit with cunning wit,
And dress the homely dishes.

She can flourish staff or pen
And deal a wound that lingers;
She can talk the talk of men,
And touch with thrilling fingers.

Match her ye across the sea,
Natures fond and fiery;
Ye who zest the turtle's nest
With the eagle's eyrie.
Soft and loving is her soul,
Swift and lofty soaring;
Mixing with its dove-like dole
Passionate adoring.

Such a she who'll match with me?
In flying or pursuing,
Subtle wiles are in her smiles
To set the world a-wooing.
She is steadfast as a star,
And yet the maddest maiden:
She can wage a gallant war,
And give the peace of Eden.

George Meredith.

XXVIII

A MATCH

If love were what the rose is,
And I were like the leaf,
Our lives would grow together
In sad or singing weather,

Blown fields or flowerful closes,
  Green pleasure or grey grief;
If love were what the rose is,
  And I were like the leaf.

If I were what the words are,
  And love were like the tune,
With double sound and single
Delight our lips would mingle,
With kisses glad as birds are
  That get sweet rain at noon;
If I were what the words are,
  And love were like the tune.

If you were life, my darling,
  And I your love were death,
We'd shine and snow together
Ere March made sweet the weather
With daffodil and starling
  And hours of fruitful breath;
If you were life, my darling,
  And I your love were death.

If you were thrall to sorrow,
  And I were page to joy,
We'd play for lives and seasons
With loving looks and treasons
And tears of night and morrow
  And laughs of maid and boy;
If you were thrall to sorrow,
  And I were page to joy.

If you were April's lady,
  And I were lord in May,
We'd throw with leaves for hours
And draw for days with flowers,
Till day like night were shady
  And night were bright like day;
If you were April's lady,
  And I were lord in May.

If you were queen of pleasure,
  And I were king of pain,
We'd hunt down love together,
Pluck out his flying-feather,
And teach his feet a measure,
  And find his mouth a rein;
If you were queen of pleasure,
  And I were king of pain.

Algernon Charles Swinburne.

XXIX

TWO IN THE CAMPAGNA

I WONDER do you feel to-day
  As I have felt since, hand in hand,
We sat down on the grass, to stray
  In spirit better through the land,
This morn of Rome and May?

For me, I touched a thought, I know,
  Has tantalized me many times,
(Like turns of thread the spiders throw
  Mocking across our path) for rhymes
To catch at and let go.

Help me to hold it! First it left
  The yellowing fennel, run to seed
There, branching from the brickwork's cleft,
  Some old tomb's ruin: yonder weed
Took up the floating weft,

Where one small orange cup amassed
  Five beetles,—blind and green they grope
Among the honey-meal: and last,
  Everywhere on the grassy slope
I traced it. Hold it fast!

The champaign with its endless fleece
  Of feathery grasses everywhere!
Silence and passion, joy and peace,
  An everlasting wash of air—
Rome's ghost since her decease.

Such life here, through such lengths of hours,
  Such miracles performed in play,
Such primal naked forms of flowers,
  Such letting nature have her way
While heaven looks from its towers!

How say you? Let us, O my dove,
  Let us be unashamed of soul,
As earth lies bare to heaven above!
  How is it under our control
To love or not to love?

I would that you were all to me,
  You that are just so much, no more.

Nor yours nor mine, nor slave nor free!
  Where does the fault lie? What the core
O' the wound, since wound must be?

I would I could adopt your will,
  See with your eyes, and set my heart
Beating by yours, and drink my fill
  At your soul's springs,—your part my part
In life, for good and ill.

No. I yearn upward, touch you close,
  Then stand away. I kiss your cheek,
Catch your soul's warmth,—I pluck the rose
  And love it more than tongue can speak—
Then the good minute goes.

Already how am I so far
  Out of that minute? Must I go
Still like the thistle-ball, no bar,
  Onward, whenever light winds blow,
Fixed by no friendly star?

Just when I seemed about to learn!
  Where is the thread now? Off again!
The old trick! Only I discern—
  Infinite passion, and the pain
Of finite hearts that yearn.

Robert Browning.

XXX

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and
height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of every day's
Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints,—I love thee with the
breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life!—and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

XXXI

When our two souls stand up erect and strong,
Face to face, silent, drawing nigh and nigher,
Until the lengthening wings break into fire
At either curvèd point,—what bitter wrong
Can the earth do to us, that we should not long
Be here contented? Think. In mounting higher,
The angels would press on us, and aspire
To drop some golden orb of perfect song

Into our deep dear silence. Let us stay
Rather on earth, Beloved, where the unfit
Contrarious moods of men recoil away
And isolate pure spirits, and permit
A place to stand and love in for a day,
With darkness and the death-hour rounding it.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

XXXII

Yet, love, mere love, is beautiful indeed
And worthy of acceptation. Fire is bright,
Let temple burn, or flax. An equal light
Leaps in the flame from cedar-plank or weed.
And love is fire; and when I say at need
I love thee . . . mark! . . . *I love thee!* . . . in thy sight
I stand transfigured, glorified aright,
With conscience of the new rays that proceed
Out of my face toward thine. There's nothing low
In love, when love the lowest; meanest creatures
Who love God, God accepts while loving so.
And what I feel, across the inferior features
Of what I am, doth flash itself, and show
How that great work of Love enhances Nature's.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

XXXIII

PORPHYRIA'S LOVER

THE rain set early in to-night,
The sullen wind was soon awake,
It tore the elm-tops down for spite,
And did its worst to vex the lake:
I listened with heart fit to break.
When glided in Porphyria; straight
She shut the cold out and the storm,
And kneeled and made the cheerless grate
Blaze up, and all the cottage warm;
Which done, she rose, and from her form
Withdrew the dripping cloak and shawl,
And laid her soiled gloves by, untied
Her hat and let the damp hair fall,
And, last, she sat down by my side
And called me. When no voice replied,
She put my arm about her waist,
And made her smooth white shoulder bare,
And all her yellow hair displaced,
And, stooping, made my cheek lie there,
And spread, o'er all, her yellow hair,
Murmuring how she loved me—she
Too weak, for all her heart's endeavour,
To set its struggling passion free
From pride, and vainer ties dissever,
And give herself to me for ever.
But passion sometimes would prevail,
Nor could to-night's gay feast restrain
A sudden thought of one so pale
For love of her, and all in vain:
So, she was come through wind and rain.

Be sure I looked up at her eyes
  Happy and proud; at last I knew
Porphyria worshipped me; surprise
  Made my heart swell, and still it grew
  While I debated what to do.
That moment she was mine, mine, fair,
  Perfectly pure and good: I found
A thing to do, and all her hair
  In one long yellow string I wound
  Three times her little throat around,
And strangled her. No pain felt she;
  I am quite sure she felt no pain.
As a shut bud that holds the bee,
  I warily oped her lids: again
  Laughed the blue eyes without a stain.
And I untightened next the tress
  About her neck; her cheek once more
Blushed bright beneath my burning kiss:
  I propped her head up as before,
  Only, this time my shoulder bore
Her head, which droops upon it still:
  The smiling rosy little head,
So glad it has its utmost will,
  That all it scorned at once is fled,
  And I, its love, am gained instead!
Porphyria's love: she guessed not how
  Her darling one wish would be heard.
And thus we sit together now,
  And all night long we have not stirred,
  And yet God has not said a word!

Robert Browning.

XXXIV

A FAREWELL

THERE lived a singer in France of old
By the tideless dolorous midland sea.
In a land of sand and ruin and gold
There shone one woman, and none but she.
And finding life for her love's sake fail,
Being fain to see her, he bade set sail,
Touched land, and saw her as life grew cold,
And praised God, seeing; and so died he.

Died, praising God for his gift and grace:
For she bowed down to him weeping, and said
"Live;" and her tears were shed on his face
Or ever the life in his face was shed.
The sharp tears fell through her hair, and stung
Once, and her close lips touched him and clung
Once, and grew one with his lips for a space;
And so drew back, and the man was dead.

O brother, the gods were good to you.
Sleep, and be glad while the world endures.
Be well content as the years wear through;
Give thanks for life, and the loves and lures;
Give thanks for life, O brother, and death,
For the sweet last sound of her feet, her breath,
For gifts she gave you, gracious and few,
Tears and kisses, that lady of yours.

Rest, and be glad of the gods; but I,
How shall I praise them, or how take rest?
There is not room under all the sky
For me that know not of worst or best,

Dream or desire of the days before,
Sweet things or bitterness, any more.
Love will not come to me now though I die,
  As love came close to you, breast to breast.

I shall never be friends again with roses;
  I shall loathe sweet tunes, where a note grown strong
Relents and recoils, and climbs and closes,
  As a wave of the sea turned back by song.
There are sounds where the soul's delight takes fire,
Face to face with its own desire:
A delight that rebels, a desire that reposes;
  I shall hate sweet music my whole life long.

The pulse of war and passion of wonder,
  The heavens that murmur, the sounds that shine,
The stars that sing and the loves that thunder,
  The music burning at heart like wine,
An armed archangel whose hands raise up
All senses mixed in the spirit's cup
Till flesh and spirit are molten in sunder—
  These things are over, and no more mine.

These were a part of the playing I heard
  Once, ere my love and my heart were at strife;
Love that sings and hath wings as a bird,
  Balm of the wound and heft of the knife.
Fairer than earth is the sea, and sleep
Than overwatching of eyes that weep,
Now time has done with his one sweet word,
  The wine and leaven of lovely life.

I shall go my ways, tread out my measure,
  Fill the days of my daily breath
With fugitive things not good to treasure,
  Do as the world doth, say as it saith;
But if we had loved each other—O sweet,
Had you felt, lying under the palms of your feet,
The heart of my heart, beating harder with pleasure
  To feel you tread it to dust and death—

Ah, had I not taken my life up and given
  All that life gives and the years let go,
The wine and honey, the balm and leaven,
  The dreams reared high and the hopes brought low?
Come life, come death, not a word be said;
Should I lose you living, and vex you dead?
I never shall tell you on earth; and in heaven,
  If I cry to you then, will you hear or know?

Algernon Charles Swinburne.

XXXV

MARIANA

"Mariana in the moated grange."
Measure for Measure.

With blackest moss the flower-plots
  Were thickly crusted, one and all:
The rusted nails fell from the knots
  That held the pear to the gable-wall.

The broken sheds look'd sad and strange:
Unlifted was the clinking latch;
Weeded and worn the ancient thatch
Upon the lonely moated grange.
She only said, "My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

Her tears fell with the dews at even;
Her tears fell ere the dews were dried;
She could not look on the sweet heaven,
Either at morn or eventide.
After the flitting of the bats,
When thickest dark did trance the sky,
She drew her casement-curtain by,
And glanced athwart the glooming flats.
She only said, "The night is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

Upon the middle of the night,
Waking she heard the night-fowl crow:
The cock sung out an hour ere light:
From the dark fen the oxen's low
Came to her: without hope of change,
In sleep she seem'd to walk forlorn,
Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed morn
About the lonely moated grange.
She only said, "The day is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

About a stone-cast from the wall
A sluice with blacken'd waters slept,
And o'er it many, round and small,
The cluster'd marish-mosses crept.
Hard by a poplar shook alway,
All silver-green with gnarled bark:
For leagues no other tree did mark
The level waste, the rounding gray.
She only said, "My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said,
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

And ever when the moon was low,
And the shrill winds were up and away,
In the white curtain, to and fro,
She saw the gusty shadow sway.
But when the moon was very low,
And wild winds bound within their cell,
The shadow of the poplar fell
Upon her bed, across her brow.
She only said, "The night is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

All day within the dreamy house,
The doors upon their hinges creak'd:
The blue fly sung in the pane; the mouse
Behind the mouldering wainscot shriek'd,
Or from the crevice peer'd about.
Old faces glimmer'd thro' the doors,
Old footsteps trod the upper floors,
Old voices called her from without.

She only said, "My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,
The slow clock ticking, and the sound
Which to the wooing wind aloof
The poplar made, did all confound
Her sense; but most she loathed the hour
When the thick-moted sunbeam lay
Athwart the chambers, and the day
Was sloping toward his western bower.
Then, said she, "I am very dreary,
He will not come," she said;
She wept, "I am aweary, aweary,
Oh God, that I were dead!"

Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

XXXVI

REMEMBRANCE

Cold in the earth—and the deep snow piled above thee,
Far, far removed, cold in the dreary grave!
Have I forgot, my only Love, to love thee,
Severed at last by Time's all-severing wave?

Now, when alone, do my thoughts no longer hover
Over the mountains, on that northern shore,

Resting their wings where heath and fern-leaves
cover
Thy noble heart for ever, ever more?

Cold in the earth—and fifteen wild Decembers,
From those brown hills, have melted into spring:
Faithful, indeed, is the spirit that remembers
After such years of change and suffering!

Sweet Love of youth, forgive, if I forget thee,
While the world's tide is bearing me along;
Other desires and other hopes beset me,
Hopes which obscure, but cannot do thee wrong!

No later light has lightened up my heaven,
No second morn has ever shone for me;
All my life's bliss from thy dear life was given,
All my life's bliss is in the grave with thee.

But, when the days of golden dreams had perished,
And even Despair was powerless to destroy;
Then did I learn how existence could be cherished,
Strengthened and fed without the aid of joy.

Then did I check the tears of useless passion—
Weaned my young soul from yearning after thine;
Sternly denied its burning wish to hasten
Down to that tomb already more than mine.

And, even yet, I dare not let it languish,
Dare not indulge in memory's rapturous pain;
Once drinking deep of that divinest anguish,
How could I seek the empty world again?

Emily Brontë.

XXXVII

ROSE AYLMER

Ah, what avails the sceptred race!
Ah, what the form divine!
What every virtue, every grace!
Rose Aylmer, all were thine.

Rose Aylmer, whom these wakeful eyes
May weep, but never see,
A night of memories and sighs
I consecrate to thee.

Walter Savage Landor.

XXXVIII

MODERN LOVE

In our old shipwrecked days there was an hour,
When in the firelight steadily aglow,
Joined slackly, we beheld the red chasm grow
Among the clicking coals. Our library-bower
That eve was left to us: and hushed we sat
As lovers to whom Time is whispering.
From sudden-opened doors we heard them sing:
The nodding elders mixed good wine with chat.

Well knew we that Life's greatest treasure lay
With us, and of it was our talk. "Ah, yes!
Love dies!" I said: I never thought it less.
She yearned to me that sentence to unsay.
Then when the fire domed blackening, I found
Her cheek was salt against my kiss, and swift
Up the sharp scale of sobs her breast did lift—
Now am I haunted by that taste! that sound!

George Meredith.

XXXIX

Mark where the pressing wind shoots javelin-like
Its skeleton shadow on the broad-backed wave!
Here is a fitting spot to dig Love's grave;
Here where the ponderous breakers plunge and strike,
And dart their hissing tongues high up the sand:
In hearing of the ocean, and in sight
Of those ribbed wind-streaks running into white.

If I the death of Love had deeply planned,
I never could have made it half so sure
As by the unblest kisses which upbraid
The full-waked sense; or failing that, degrade!
'Tis morning: but no morning can restore
What we have forfeited. I see no sin:
The wrong is mixed. In tragic life, God wot,
No villain need be! Passions spin the plot:
We are betrayed by what is false within.

George Meredith.

XL

We saw the swallows gathering in the sky,
And in the osier-isle we heard the noise.
We had not to look back on summer joys,
Or forward to a summer of bright dye:
But in the largeness of the evening earth
Our spirits grew as we went side by side.
The hour became her husband and my bride.
Love, that had robbed us so, thus blessed our dearth!
The pilgrims of the year waxed very loud
In multitudinous chatterings, as the flood
Full brown came from the West, and like pale blood
Expanded to the upper crimson cloud.
Love, that had robbed us of immortal things,
This little moment mercifully gave,
And still I see across the twilight wave
The swan sail with her young beneath her wings.

George Meredith.

XLI

Thus piteously Love closed what he begat:
The union of this ever-diverse pair!
These two were rapid falcons in a snare,
Condemned to do the flitting of the bat.
Lovers beneath the singing sky of May,
They wandered once; clear as the dew on flowers:
But they fed not on the advancing hours:
Their hearts held cravings for the buried day.

Then each applied to each that fatal knife,
Deep questioning, which probes to endless dole.
Ah, what a dusty answer gets the soul
When hot for certainties in this our life!—
In tragic hints here see what evermore
Moves dark as yonder midnight ocean's force,
Thundering like ramping hosts of warrior horse,
To throw that faint thin line upon the shore!

George Meredith.

XLII

TWICE

I TOOK my heart in my hand
(O my love, O my love),
I said: Let me fall or stand,
Let me live or die,
But this once hear me speak—
(O my love, O my love)—
Yet a woman's words are weak;
You should speak, not I.

You took my heart in your hand
With a friendly smile,
With a critical eye you scanned,
Then set it down,
And said: It is still unripe,
Better wait awhile;
Wait while the skylarks pipe,
Till the corn grows brown.

As you set it down it broke—
  Broke, but I did not wince;
I smiled at the speech you spoke,
  At your judgment that I heard:
But I have not often smiled
  Since then, nor questioned since,
Nor cared for corn-flowers wild,
  Nor sung with the singing bird.

I take my heart in my hand,
  O my God, O my God,
My broken heart in my hand:
  Thou hast seen, judge Thou.
My hope was written on sand,
  O my God, O my God:
Now let Thy judgment stand—
  Yea, judge me now.

This contemned of a man,
  This marred one heedless day,
This heart take Thou to scan
  Both within and without:
Refine with fire its gold,
  Purge Thou its dross away—
Yea, hold it in Thy hold,
  Whence none can pluck it out.

I take my heart in my hand—
  I shall not die, but live—
Before Thy face I stand;
  I, for Thou callest such:

All that I have I bring,
All that I am I give,
Smile Thou and I shall sing,
But shall not question much.

Christina Rossetti.

XLIII

THE LAST RIDE TOGETHER

I SAID—Then, dearest, since 'tis so,
Since now at length my fate I know,
Since nothing all my love avails,
Since all, my life seemed meant for, fails,
Since this was written and needs must be—
My whole heart rises up to bless
Your name in pride and thankfulness!
Take back the hope you gave,—I claim
Only a memory of the same,
—And this beside, if you will not blame,
Your leave for one more last ride with me.

My mistress bent that brow of hers;
Those deep dark eyes where pride demurs
When pity would be softening through,
Fixed me a breathing-while or two
With life or death in the balance: right!
The blood replenished me again;
My last thought was at least not vain:
I and my mistress, side by side
Shall be together, breathe and ride,
So, one day more am I deified.
Who knows but the world may end to-night?

Hush! if you saw some western cloud
All billowy-bosomed, over-bowed
By many benedictions—sun's
And moon's and evening-star's at once—
  And so, you, looking and loving best,
Conscious grew, your passion drew
Cloud, sunset, moonrise, star-shine too,
Down on you, near and yet more near,
Till flesh must fade for heaven was here!—
Thus leant she and lingered—joy and fear!
  Thus lay she a moment on my breast.

Then we began to ride. My soul
Smoothed itself out, a long-cramped scroll
Freshening and fluttering in the wind.
Past hopes already lay behind.
  What need to strive with a life awry?
Had I said that, had I done this,
So might I gain, so might I miss.
Might she have loved me? just as well
She might have hated, who can tell!
Where had I been now if the worst befell?
  And here we are riding, she and I.

Fail I alone, in words and deeds?
Why, all men strive and who succeeds?
We rode; it seemed my spirit flew,
Saw other regions, cities new,
  As the world rushed by on either side.
I thought,—All labour, yet no less
Bear up beneath their unsuccess.

Look at the end of work, contrast
The petty done, the undone vast,
This present of theirs with the hopeful past.
I hoped she would love me; here we ride.

What hand and brain went ever paired?
What heart alike conceived and dared?
What act proved all its thought had been?
What will but felt the fleshly screen?
We ride and I see her bosom heave.
There's many a crown for who can reach.
Ten lines, a statesman's life in each!
The flag stuck on a heap of bones,
A soldier's doing! what atones?
They scratch his name on the Abbey-stones.
My riding is better, by their leave.

What does it all mean, poet? Well,
Your brains beat into rhythm, you tell
What we felt only; you expressed
You hold things beautiful the best,
And pace them in rhyme so, side by side.
'Tis something, nay 'tis much: but then,
Have you yourself what's best for men?
Are you—poor, sick, old ere your time—
Nearer one whit your own sublime
Than we who never have turned a rhyme?
Sing, riding's a joy! For me, I ride.

And you, great sculptor—so, you gave
A score of years to Art, her slave,
And that's your Venus, whence we turn
To yonder girl that fords the burn!

You acquiesce, and shall I repine?
What, man of music, you grown grey
With notes and nothing else to say,
Is this your sole praise from a friend,
"Greatly his opera strains intend,
But in music we know how fashions end!"
I gave my youth; but we ride, in fine.

Who knows what's fit for us? Had fate
Proposed bliss here should sublimate
My being—had I signed the bond—
Still one must lead some life beyond,
Have a bliss to die with, dim-descried.
This foot once planted on the goal,
This glory-garland round my soul,
Could I descry such? Try and test!
I sink back shuddering from the quest.
Earth being so good, would heaven seem best?
Now, heaven and she are beyond this ride.

And yet—she has not spoke so long!
What if heaven be that, fair and strong
At life's best, with our eyes upturned
Whither life's flower is first discerned,
We, fixed so, ever should so abide?
What if we still ride on, we two
With life for ever old yet new,
Changed not in kind but in degree,
The instant made eternity,—
And heaven just prove that I and she
Ride, ride together, for ever ride?

Robert Browning.

XLIV

CHILD'S SONG

What is gold worth, say,
Worth for work or play,
Worth to keep or pay,
Hide or throw away,
  Hope about or fear?
What is love worth, pray?
  Worth a tear?

Golden on the mould
Lie the dead leaves roll'd
Of the wet woods old,
Yellow leaves and cold,
  Woods without a dove;
Gold is worth but gold;
  Love's worth love.

Algernon Charles Swinburne.

XLV

MEETING AT NIGHT

The grey sea and the long black land;
And the yellow half-moon large and low;
And the startled little waves that leap
In fiery ringlets from their sleep,
As I gain the cove with pushing prow,
And quench its speed i' the slushy sand.

Then a mile of warm sea-scented beach
Three fields to cross till a farm appears;
A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch
And blue spurt of a lighted match,
And a voice less loud, thro' its joys and fears,
Than the two hearts beating each to each!

Robert Browning.

XLVI

PARTING AT MORNING

Round the cape of a sudden came the sea,
And the sun looked over the mountain's rim:
And straight was a path of gold for him,
And the need of a world of men for me.

Robert Browning.

XLVII

A GREETING

But once or twice we met, touched hands,
To-day between us both expands
  A waste of tumbling waters wide,—
  A waste by me as yet untried,
Vague with the doubt of unknown lands.

Time like a despot speeds his sands:
A year he blots, a day he brands;
  We walked, we talked by Thamis' side
    But once or twice.

What makes a friend? What filmy strands
Are these that turn to iron bands?
What knot is this so firmly tied
That naught but fate can now divide?—
Ah, these are things one understands
But once or twice.

Austin Dobson.

XLVIII

LOVE AMONG THE RUINS

WHERE the quiet-coloured end of evening smiles,
Miles and miles
On the solitary pastures where our sheep
Half-asleep
Tinkle homeward thro' the twilight, stray or stop
As they crop—
Was the site once of a city great and gay,
(So they say)
Of our country's very capital, its prince
Ages since
Held his court in, gathered councils, wielding far
Peace or war.

Now,—the country does not even boast a tree,
As you see,
To distinguish slopes of verdure, certain rills
From the hills
Intersect and give a name to (else they run
Into one)

Where the domed and daring palace shot its spires
Up like fires
O'er the hundred-gated circuit of a wall
Bounding all,
Made of marble, men might march on nor be pressed
Twelve abreast.

And such plenty and perfection, see, of grass
Never was!
Such a carpet as, this summer-time, o'erspreads
And embeds
Every vestige of the city, guessed alone,
Stock or stone—
Where a multitude of men breathed joy and woe
Long ago;
Lust of glory pricked their hearts up, dread of shame
Struck them tame;
And that glory and that shame alike, the gold
Bought and sold.

Now,—the single little turret that remains
On the plains,
By the caper overrooted, by the gourd
Overscored,
While the patching houseleek's head of blossom winks
Through the chinks—
Marks the basement whence a tower in ancient time
Sprang sublime,

And a burning ring, all round, the chariots traced
As they raced,
And the monarch and his minions and his dames
Viewed the games.

And I know, while thus the quiet-coloured eve
Smiles to leave
To their folding, all our many-tinkling fleece
In such peace,
And the slopes and rills in undistinguished grey
Melt away—
That a girl with eager eyes and yellow hair
Waits me there
In the turret whence the charioteers caught soul
For the goal,
When the king looked, where she looks now, breathless, dumb
Till I come.

But he looked upon the city, every side,
Far and wide,
All the mountains topped with temples, all the glades'
Colonnades,
All the causeys, bridges, aqueducts,—and then,
All the men!
When I do come, she will speak not, she will stand,
Either hand
On my shoulder, give her eyes the first embrace
Of my face,
Ere we rush, ere we extinguish sight and speech
Each on each.

In one year they sent a million fighters forth
South and North,
And they built their gods a brazen pillar high
As the sky,
Yet reserved a thousand chariots in full force—
Gold, of course.
Oh heart! oh blood that freezes, blood that burns!
Earth's returns
For whole centuries of folly, noise and sin!
Shut them in,
With their triumphs and their glories and the rest!
Love is best.

Robert Browning.

XLIX

TO MARGUERITE

Yes! in the sea of life enisled,
With echoing straits between us thrown,
Dotting the shoreless watery wild,
We mortal millions live *alone*.
The islands feel the enclasping flow,
And then their endless bounds they know.

But when the moon their hollows lights,
And they are swept by balms of spring,
And in their glens, on starry nights,
The nightingales divinely sing;
And lovely notes, from shore to shore,
Across the sounds and channels pour—

Oh! then a longing like despair
Is to their farthest caverns sent;
For surely once, they feel, we were
Parts of a single continent!
Now round us spreads the watery plain—
Oh might our marges meet again!

Who order'd, that their longing's fire
Should be, as soon as kindled, cool'd?
Who renders vain their deep desire?
A God, a God their severance ruled!
And bade betwixt their shores to be
The unplumb'd, salt, estranging sea.

Matthew Arnold.

L

SAPPHO

All the night sleep came not upon my eyelids,
Shed not dew, nor shook nor unclosed a feather,
Yet with lips shut close and with eyes of iron
Stood and beheld me.

Then to me so lying awake a vision
Came without sleep over the seas and touched me,
Softly touched mine eyelids and lips; and I too,
Full of the vision,

Saw the white implacable Aphrodite,
Saw the hair unbound and the feet unsandalled
Shine as fire of sunset on western waters;
Saw the reluctant

Feet, the straining plumes of the doves that drew
her,
Looking always, looking with necks reverted,
Back to Lesbos, back to the hills whereunder
Shone Mitylene;

Heard the flying feet of the Loves behind her
Make a sudden thunder upon the waters,
As the thunder flung from the strong unclosing
Wings of a great wind.

So the goddess fled from her place, with awful
Sound of feet and thunder of wings around her;
While behind a clamour of singing women
Severed the twilight.

Ah the singing, ah the delight, the passion!
All the Loves wept, listening; sick with anguish,
Stood the crowned nine Muses about Apollo;
Fear was upon them,

While the tenth sang wonderful things they knew
not.
Ah the tenth, the Lesbian! the nine were silent,
None endured the sound of her song for weeping;
Laurel by laurel,

Faded all their crowns; but about her forehead,
Round her woven tresses and ashen temples
White as dead snow, paler than grass in summer,
Ravaged with kisses,

Shone a light of fire as a crown for ever.
Yea, almost the implacable Aphrodite
Paused, and almost wept; such a song was that song.
Yea, by her name too

Called her, saying, "Turn to me, O my Sappho";
Yet she turned her face from the Loves, she saw not
Tears for laughter darken immortal eyelids,
Heard not about her

Fearful fitful wings of the doves departing,
Saw not how the bosom of Aphrodite
Shook with weeping, saw not her shaken raiment,
Saw not her hands wrung;

Saw the Lesbians kissing across their smitten
Lutes with lips more sweet than the sound of lute-strings,
Mouth to mouth and hand upon hand, her chosen,
Fairer than all men;

Only saw the beautiful lips and fingers,
Full of songs and kisses and little whispers,
Full of music; only beheld among them
Soar, as a bird soars

Newly fledged, her visible song, a marvel,
Made of perfect sound and exceeding passion,
Sweetly shapen, terrible, full of thunders,
Clothed with the wind's wings.

Then rejoiced she, laughing with love, and scattered
Roses, awful roses of holy blossom;
Then the Loves thronged sadly with hidden faces
Round Aphrodite,

Then the Muses, stricken at heart, were silent;
Yea, the gods waxed pale; such a song was that song.
All reluctant, all with a fresh repulsion,
Fled from before her.

All withdrew long since, and the land was barren,
Full of fruitless women and music only.
Now perchance, when winds are assuaged at sunset,
Lulled at the dewfall,

By the grey sea-side, unassuaged, unheard of,
Unbeloved, unseen in the ebb of twilight,
Ghosts of outcast women return lamenting,
Purged not in Lethe,

Clothed about with flame and with tears, and singing
Songs that move the heart of the shaken heaven,
Songs that break the heart of the earth with pity,
Hearing, to hear them.

Algernon Charles Swinburne.

LI

THE PRISONER

Still, let my tyrants know, I am not doomed to wear
Year after year in gloom, and desolate despair;
A messenger of Hope comes every night to me,
And offers for short life, eternal liberty.

He comes with western winds, with evening's wandering airs,
With that clear dusk of heaven that brings the thickest stars.
Winds take a pensive tone, and stars a tender fire,
And visions rise, and change, that kill me with desire.

Desire for nothing known in my maturer years,
When joy grew mad with awe, at counting future tears:
When, if my spirit's sky was full of flashes warm,
I knew not whence they came, from sun or thunderstorm.

But, first a hush of peace—a soundless calm descends;
The struggle of distress and fierce impatience ends;
Mute music soothes my breast — unuttered harmony
That I could never dream, till Earth was lost to me.

Then dawns the Invisible; the Unseen its truth reveals,
My outward sense is gone, my inward essence feels;
Its wings are almost free—its home, its harbour found,
Measuring the gulph, it stoops and dares the final bound.

Oh! dreadful is the check—intense the agony—
When the ear begins to hear, and the eye begins to see;
When the pulse begins to throb, the brain to think again;
The soul to feel the flesh, and the flesh to feel the chain.

Yet would I lose no sting, would wish no torture less;
The more that anguish racks, the earlier it will bless;
And robed in fires of hell, or bright with heavenly shine,
If it but herald Death, the vision is divine.

Emily Brontë.

LII

MY GARDEN

A GARDEN is a lovesome thing, God wot!
Rose plot,
Fringed pool,
Ferned grot—

The veriest school
Of peace; and yet the fool
Contends that God is not—
Not God! in gardens! when the eve is cool?
Nay, but I have a sign;
'Tis very sure God walks in mine.

Thomas Edward Brown.

LIII

HOME THOUGHTS, FROM ABROAD

Oh, to be in England
Now that April's there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,
That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
In England—now!

And after April, when May follows,
And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows!
Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
Blossoms and dewdrops — at the bent spray's edge—
That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,
Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture!

And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,
All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
The buttercups, the little children's dower—
Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower.

Robert Browning.

LIV

THE *REVENGE*

A Ballad of the Fleet

1

At Flores in the Azores Sir Richard Grenville lay,
And a pinnace, like a flutter'd bird, came flying from far away:
"Spanish ships of war at sea! we have sighted fifty-three!"
Then sware Lord Thomas Howard: "'Fore God I am no coward;
But I cannot meet them here, for my ships are out of gear,
And the half my men are sick. I must fly, but follow quick.
We are six ships of the line; can we fight with fifty-three?"

2

Then spake Sir Richard Grenville: "I know you are no coward;
You fly them for a moment to fight with them again.

But I've ninety men and more that are lying sick ashore.
I should count myself the coward if I left them, my Lord Howard,
To these Inquisition dogs and the devildoms of Spain."

3

So Lord Howard past away with five ships of war that day,
Till he melted like a cloud in the silent summer heaven;
But Sir Richard bore in hand all his sick men from the land
Very carefully and slow,
Men of Bideford in Devon,
And we laid them on the ballast down below;
For we brought them all aboard,
And they blest him in their pain that they were not left to Spain,
To the thumbscrew and the stake, for the glory of the Lord.

4

He had only a hundred seamen to work the ship and to fight,
And he sailed away from Flores till the Spaniard came in sight,
With his huge sea-castles heaving upon the weather bow.
"Shall we fight or shall we fly?
Good Sir Richard, tell us now,
For to fight is but to die!

There'll be little of us left by the time this sun be set."
And Sir Richard said again: "We be all good English men.
Let us bang these dogs of Seville, the children of the devil,
For I never turn'd my back upon Don or devil yet."

5

Sir Richard spoke and he laugh'd, and we roar'd a hurrah, and so
The little *Revenge* ran on sheer into the heart of the foe,
With her hundred fighters on deck, and her ninety sick below;
For half of their fleet to the right and half to the left were seen,
And the little *Revenge* ran on thro' the long sea-lane between.

6

Thousands of their soldiers look'd down from their decks and laugh'd,
Thousands of their seamen made mock at the mad little craft
Running on and on, till delay'd
By their mountain-like *San Philip* that, of fifteen hundred tons,
And up-shadowing high above us with her yawning tiers of guns,
Took the breath from our sails, and we stay'd.

7

And while now the great *San Philip* hung above
us like a cloud
Whence the thunderbolt will fall
Long and loud,
Four galleons drew away
From the Spanish fleet that day,
And two upon the larboard and two upon the
starboard lay,
And the battle-thunder broke from them all.

8

But anon the great *San Philip*, she bethought
herself and went
Having that within her womb that had left her
ill content;
And the rest they came aboard us, and they fought
us hand to hand,
For a dozen times they came with their pikes and
musqueteers,
And a dozen times we shook 'em off as a dog that
shakes his ears
When he leaps from the water to the land.

9

And the sun went down, and the stars came out
far over the summer sea,
But never a moment ceased the fight of the one
and the fifty-three.

Ship after ship, the whole night long, their high-built galleons came,
Ship after ship, the whole night long, with her battle-thunder and flame;
Ship after ship, the whole night long, drew back with her dead and her shame.
For some were sunk and many were shatter'd, and so could fight us no more—
God of battles, was ever a battle like this in the world before?

10

For he said "Fight on! fight on!"
Tho' his vessel was all but a wreck;
And it chanced that, when half of the short summer night was gone,
With a grisly wound to be drest he had left the deck,
But a bullet struck him that was dressing it suddenly dead,
And himself he was wounded again in the side and the head,
And he said "Fight on! fight on!"

11

And the night went down, and the sun smiled out far over the summer sea,
And the Spanish fleet with broken sides lay round us all in a ring;
But they dared not touch us again, for they fear'd that we still could sting,
So they watch'd what the end would be.

And we had not fought them in vain,
But in perilous plight were we,
Seeing forty of our poor hundred were slain,
And half of the rest of us maim'd for life
In the crash of the cannonades and the desperate strife;
And the sick men down in the hold were most of them stark and cold,
And the pikes were all broken or bent, and the powder was all of it spent;
And the masts and the rigging were lying over the side;
But Sir Richard cried in his English pride,
"We have fought such a fight for a day and a night
As may never be fought again!
We have won great glory, my men!
And a day less or more
At sea or ashore,
We die—does it matter when?
Sink me the ship, Master Gunner—sink her, split her in twain!
Fall into the hands of God, not into the hands of Spain!"

12

And the gunner said, "Ay, ay," but the seamen made reply:
"We have children, we have wives,
And the Lord hath spared our lives.
We will make the Spaniard promise, if we yield, to let us go;

We shall live to fight again and to strike another blow."
And the lion there lay dying, and they yielded to the foe.

13

And the stately Spanish men to their flagship bore him then,
Where they laid him by the mast, old Sir Richard caught at last,
And they praised him to his face with their courtly foreign grace;
But he rose upon their decks, and he cried:
"I have fought for Queen and Faith like a valiant man and true;
I have only done my duty as a man is bound to do:
With a joyful spirit I Sir Richard Grenville die!"
And he fell upon their decks, and he died.

14

And they stared at the dead that had been so valiant and true,
And had holden the power and glory of Spain so cheap
That he dared her with one little ship and his English few;
Was he devil or man? He was devil for aught they knew,
But they sank his body with honour down into the deep,
And they mann'd the *Revenge* with a swarthier alien crew,

And away she sail'd with her loss and long'd for
her own;
When a wind from the lands they had ruin'd
awoke from sleep,
And the water began to heave and the weather to
moan,
And or ever that evening ended a great gale blew,
And a wave like the wave that is raised by an
earthquake grew,
Till it smote on their hulls and their sails and
their masts and their flags,
And the whole sea plunged and fell on the shot-
shatter'd navy of Spain,
And the little *Revenge* herself went down by the
island crags
To be lost evermore in the main.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

LV

DARK ROSALEEN

O MY Dark Rosaleen,
Do not sigh, do not weep!
The priests are on the ocean green,
They march along the deep.
There's wine from the royal Pope,
Upon the ocean green;
And Spanish ale shall give you hope,
My Dark Rosaleen!
My own Rosaleen!

Shall glad your heart, shall give you hope,
Shall give you health, and help, and hope,
My Dark Rosaleen!

Over hills, and thro' dales,
Have I roam'd for your sake;
All yesterday I sail'd with sails
On river and on lake.
The Erne, at its highest flood,
I dash'd across unseen.
For there was lightning in my blood,
My Dark Rosaleen!
My own Rosaleen!
O, there was lightning in my blood,
Red lightning lighten'd thro' my blood,
My Dark Rosaleen!

All day long, in unrest,
To and fro do I move.
The very soul within my breast
Is wasted for you, love!
The heart in my bosom faints
To think of you, my Queen,
My life of life, my saint of saints,
My Dark Rosaleen!
My own Rosaleen!
To hear your sweet and sad complaints,
My life, my love, my saint of saints,
My Dark Rosaleen!

Woe and pain, pain and woe,
Are my lot, night and noon,
To see your bright face clouded so,
Like to the mournful moon.

But yet will I rear your throne
  Again in golden sheen;
'Tis you shall reign, shall reign alone,
  My Dark Rosaleen!
  My own Rosaleen!
'Tis you shall have the golden throne,
'Tis you shall reign, and reign alone,
  My Dark Rosaleen!

Over dews, over sands,
  Will I fly, for your weal:
Your holy delicate white hands
  Shall girdle me with steel.
At home, in your emerald bowers,
  From morning's dawn till e'en,
You'll pray for me, my flower of flowers,
  My Dark Rosaleen!
  My fond Rosaleen!
You'll think of me thro' daylight hours,
My virgin flower, my flower of flowers,
  My Dark Rosaleen!

I could scale the blue air,
  I could plough the high hills,
O, I could kneel all night in prayer,
  To heal your many ills!
And one beamy smile from you
  Would float like light between
My toils and me, my own, my true,
  My Dark Rosaleen!
  My fond Rosaleen!
Would give me life and soul anew,
A second life, a soul anew,
  My Dark Rosaleen!

O, the Erne shall run red,
With redundance of blood,
The earth shall rock beneath our tread,
And flames wrap hill and wood,
And gun-peal and slogan-cry
Wake many a glen serene,
Ere you shall fade, ere you shall die,
My Dark Rosaleen!
My own Rosaleen!
The Judgement Hour must first be nigh,
Ere you can fade, ere you can die,
My Dark Rosaleen!

James Clarence Mangan.

LVI

THE EAGLE

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

LVII

SUMMER EVENING

THE frog half fearful jumps across the path,
And little mouse that leaves its hole at eve
Nimbles with timid dread beneath the swath;
My rustling steps awhile their joys deceive,
Till past,—and then the cricket sings more strong,
And grasshoppers in merry moods still wear
The short night weary with their fretting song.
Up from behind the molehill jumps the hare,
Cheat of his chosen bed, and from the bank
The yellowhammer flutters in short fears
From off its nest hid in the grasses rank,
And drops again when no more noise it hears.
Thus nature's human link and endless thrall,
Proud man, still seems the enemy of all.

John Clare.

LVIII

THE HEART AND NATURE

THE lake is calm; and, calm, the skies
In yonder cloudless sunset glow,
Where, o'er the woodland, homeward flies
The solitary crow;

No moan the cushat makes to heave
A leaflet round her windless nest;
The air is silent in the eve;
The world's at rest.

All bright below; all pure above;
No sense of pain, no sign of wrong;
Save in thy heart of hopeless love,
Poor Child of Song!

Why must the soul through Nature rove,
At variance with her general plan?
A stranger to the Power, whose love
Soothes all save Man?

Why lack the strength of meaner creatures?
The wandering sheep, the grazing kine,
Are surer of their simple natures
Than I of mine.

For all their wants the poorest land
Affords supply; they browse and breed;
I scarce divine, and ne'er have found,
What most I need.

O God, that in this human heart
Hast made belief so hard to grow,
And set the doubt, the pang, the smart
In all we know—

Why hast thou, too, in solemn jest
At this tormented Thinking-power.
Inscribed, in flame on yonder West,
In hues on every flower,

Through all the vast unthinking sphere
Of mere material Force without,
Rebuke so vehement and severe
To the least doubt?

And robed the world, and hung the night,
With silent, stern, and solemn forms;
And strown with sounds of awe, and might,
The seas and storms;—

All lacking power to impart
To man the secret he assails,
But arm'd to crush him, if his heart
Once doubts or fails!

To make him feel the same forlorn
Despair, the Fiend hath felt ere now,
In gazing at the stern sweet scorn
On Michael's brow?

Edward Robert, first Earl of Lytton.

LIX

TEARS, IDLE TEARS

Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.

Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
That brings our friends up from the underworld,
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the verge;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

Dear as remember'd kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd
On lips that are for others; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

LX

THEY say the Lion and the Lizard keep
The Courts where Jamshyd gloried and drank deep,
And Bahram, that great Hunter—the Wild Ass
Stamps o'er his Head, and he lies fast asleep.

I sometimes think that never blows so red
The Rose as where some buried Caesar bled;
That every Hyacinth the Garden wears
Dropt in its Lap from some once lovely Head.

And this delightful Herb whose tender Green
Fledges the River's Lip on which we lean—
Ah, lean upon it lightly! for who knows
From what once lovely Lip it springs unseen.

Edward FitzGerald.

LXI

DREAM LAND

Where sunless rivers weep
Their waves into the deep,
She sleeps a charmèd sleep:
  Awake her not.
Led by a single star,
She came from very far
To seek where shadows are
  Her pleasant lot.

She left the rosy morn,
She left the fields of corn,
For twilight cold and lorn
  And water springs.
Through sleep, as through a veil,
She sees the sky look pale,
And hears the nightingale
  That sadly sings.

Rest, rest, a perfect rest
Shed over brow and breast;
Her face is toward the west,
  The purple land.
She cannot see the grain
Ripening on hill and plain;
She cannot feel the rain
  Upon her hand.

Rest, rest, for evermore
Upon a mossy shore;
Rest, rest at the heart's core
  Till time shall cease:
Sleep that no pain shall wake;
Night that no morn shall break
Till joy shall overtake
  Her perfect peace.

Christina Rossetti.

LXII

MAY AND DEATH

I WISH that when you died last May,
  Charles, there had died along with you
Three parts of spring's delightful things;
  Ay, and, for me, the fourth part too.

A foolish thought, and worse, perhaps!
  There must be many a pair of friends
Who, arm in arm, deserve the warm
  Moon-births and the long evening-ends.

So, for their sake, be May still May!
  Let their new time, as mine of old,
Do all it did for me: I bid
  Sweet sights and sounds throng manifold.

Only, one little sight, one plant,
  Woods have in May, that starts up green
Save a sole streak which, so to speak,
  Is spring's blood, spilt its leaves between.

That, they might spare; a certain wood
  Might miss the plant; their loss were small:
But I,—whene'er the leaf grows there,
  Its drop comes from my heart, that's all.

Robert Browning.

LXIII

Break, break, break,
  On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
  The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
  That he shouts with his sister at play!
O well for the sailor lad,
  That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on
  To their haven under the hill;
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
  And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,
  At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
  Will never come back to me.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

LXIV

DEPARTURE

It was not like your great and gracious ways
Do you, that have nought other to lament,
Never, my Love, repent
Of how, that July afternoon,
You went,
With sudden, unintelligible phrase,
And frighten'd eye,
Upon your journey of so many days,
Without a single kiss, or a good-bye?
I knew, indeed, that you were parting soon;
And so we sate, within the low sun's rays,
You whispering to me, for your voice was weak,
Your harrowing praise.
Well, it was well,
To hear you such things speak,
And I could tell
What made your eyes a glowing gloom of love,
As a warm South-wind sombres a March grove.
And it was like your great and gracious ways
To turn your talk on daily things, my Dear,
Lifting the luminous, pathetic lash
To let the laughter flash,
Whilst I drew near,
Because you spoke so low that I could scarcely hear.
But all at once to leave me at the last,
More at the wonder than the loss aghast,
With huddled, unintelligible phrase,
And frighten'd eye,

And go your journey of all days
With not one kiss, or a good-bye,
And the only loveless look the look with which
you pass'd:
'Twas all unlike your great and gracious ways.

Coventry Patmore.

LXV

REQUIESCAT

Strew on her roses, roses,
And never a spray of yew!
In quiet she reposes;
Ah, would that I did too!

Her mirth the world required;
She bathed it in smiles of glee.
But her heart was tired, tired,
And now they let her be.

Her life was turning, turning,
In mazes of heat and sound.
But for peace her soul was yearning,
And now peace laps her round.

Her cabin'd, ample spirit,
It flutter'd and fail'd for breath.
To-night it doth inherit
The vasty hall of death.

Matthew Arnold.

LXVI

CALM is the morn without a sound,
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,
And only thro' the faded leaf
The chestnut pattering to the ground:

Calm and deep peace on this high wold,
And on these dews that drench the furze,
And all the silvery gossamers
That twinkle into green and gold:

Calm and still light on yon great plain
That sweeps with all its autumn bowers,
And crowded farms and lessening towers,
To mingle with the bounding main:

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,
These leaves that redden to the fall;
And in my heart, if calm at all,
If any calm, a calm despair:

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,
And waves that sway themselves in rest,
And dead calm in that noble breast
Which heaves but with the heaving deep.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

LXVII

THE PORTRAIT

This is her picture as she was:
  It seems a thing to wonder on,
As though mine image in the glass
  Should tarry when myself am gone.
I gaze until she seems to stir,
Until mine eyes almost aver
  That now, even now, the sweet lips part
  To breathe the words of the sweet heart:—
And yet the earth is over her.

Alas! even such the thin-drawn ray
  That makes the prison-depths more rude,—
The drip of water night and day
  Giving a tongue to solitude.
Yet only this, of love's whole prize,
Remains; save what in mournful guise
  Takes counsel with my soul alone,—
  Save what is secret and unknown,
Below the earth, above the skies.

In painting her I shrined her face
  'Mid mystic trees, where light falls in
Hardly at all; a covert place
  Where you might think to find a din
Of doubtful talk, and a live flame
Wandering, and many a shape whose name
  Not itself knoweth, and old dew,
  And your own footsteps meeting you,
And all things going as they came.

A deep dim wood; and there she stands
  As in that wood that day: for so
Was the still movement of her hands
  And such the pure line's gracious flow.
And passing fair the type must seem,
Unknown the presence and the dream.
  'Tis she: though of herself, alas!
  Less than her shadow on the grass
Or than her image in the stream.

That day we met there, I and she
  One with the other all alone;
And we were blithe; yet memory
  Saddens those hours, as when the moon
Looks upon daylight. And with her
I stooped to drink the spring-water,
  Athirst where other waters sprang:
  And where the echo is, she sang,—
My soul another echo there.

But when that hour my soul won strength
  For words whose silence wastes and kills,
Dull raindrops smote us, and at length
  Thundered the heat within the hills.
That eve I spoke those words again
Beside the pelted window-pane;
  And there she hearkened what I said,
  With under-glances that surveyed
The empty pastures blind with rain.

Next day the memories of these things,
  Like leaves through which a bird has flown,

Still vibrated with Love's warm wings;
  Till I must make them all my own
And paint this picture. So, 'twixt ease
Of talk and sweet long silences,
  She stood among the plants in bloom
  At windows of a summer room,
To feign the shadow of the trees.

And as I wrought, while all above
  And all around was fragrant air,
In the sick burthen of my love
  It seemed each sun-thrilled blossom there
Beat like a heart among the leaves.
O heart that never beats nor heaves,
  In that one darkness lying still,
  What now to thee my love's great will
Or the fine web the sunshine weaves?

For now doth daylight disavow
  Those days—nought left to see or hear.
Only in solemn whispers now
  At night-time these things reach mine ear;
When the leaf-shadows at a breath
Shrink in the road, and all the heath,
  Forest and water, far and wide,
  In limpid starlight glorified,
Lie like the mystery of death.

Last night at last I could have slept,
  And yet delayed my sleep till dawn,
Still wandering. Then it was I wept:
  For unawares I came upon

Those glades where once she walked with me,
And as I stood there suddenly,
  All wan with traversing the night,
  Upon the desolate verge of light
Yearned loud the iron-bosomed sea.

Even so, where Heaven holds breath and hears
  The beating heart of Love's own breast,—
Where round the secret of all spheres
  All angels lay their wings to rest,—
How shall my soul stand rapt and awed,
When, by the new birth borne abroad
  Throughout the music of the suns,
  It enters in her soul at once
And knows the silence there for God!

Here with her face doth memory sit
  Meanwhile, and wait the day's decline,
Till other eyes shall look from it,
  Eyes of the spirit's Palestine,
Even than the old gaze tenderer:
While hopes and aims long lost with her
  Stand round her image side by side,
  Like tombs of pilgrims that have died
About the Holy Sepulchre.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

LXVIII

THE SCHOLAR-GIPSY

Go, for they call you, shepherd, from the hill;
Go, shepherd, and untie the wattled cotes!
No longer leave thy wistful flock unfed,
Nor let thy bawling fellows rack their throats,
Nor the cropp'd herbage shoot another head.
But when the fields are still,
And the tired men and dogs all gone to rest,
And only the white sheep are sometimes seen
Cross and recross the strips of moon-blanch'd green,
Come, shepherd, and again begin the quest!

Here, where the reaper was at work of late—
In this high field's dark corner, where he leaves
His coat, his basket, and his earthen cruse,
And in the sun all morning binds the sheaves,
Then here, at noon, comes back his stores to use—
Here will I sit and wait,
While to my ear from uplands far away
The bleating of the folded flocks is borne,
With distant cries of reapers in the corn—
All the live murmur of a summer's day.

Screen'd is this nook o'er the high, half-reap'd field,
And here till sundown, shepherd! will I be.
Through the thick corn the scarlet poppies peep,

And round green roots and yellowing stalks I see
Pale pink convolvulus in tendrils creep;
And air-swept lindens yield
Their scent, and rustle down their perfumed showers
Of bloom on the bent grass where I am laid,
And bower me from the August sun with shade;
And the eye travels down to Oxford's towers.

And near me on the grass lies Glanvil's book—
Come, let me read the oft-read tale again!
The story of the Oxford scholar poor,
Of pregnant parts and quick inventive brain,
Who, tired of knocking at preferment's door,
One summer-morn forsook
His friends, and went to learn the gipsy-lore,
And roam'd the world with that wild brotherhood,
And came, as most men deem'd, to little good,
But came to Oxford and his friends no more.

But once, years after, in the country-lanes,
Two scholars, whom at college erst he knew,
Met him, and of his way of life enquired;
Whereat he answer'd, that the gipsy-crew,
His mates, had arts to rule as they desired
The workings of men's brains,
And they can bind them to what thoughts they will.
"And I," he said, "the secret of their art,
When fully learn'd, will to the world impart:
But it needs heaven-sent moments for this skill."

This said, he left them, and return'd no more.
But rumours hung about the country-side,
That the lost Scholar long was seen to stray,
Seen by rare glimpses, pensive and tongue-tied,
In hat of antique shape, and cloak of grey,
The same the gipsies wore.
Shepherds had met him on the Hurst in spring
At some lone alehouse in the Berkshire moors,
On the warm ingle-bench, the smock-frock'd boors
Had found him seated at their entering,

But, 'mid their drink and clatter, he would fly.
And I myself seem half to know thy looks,
And put the shepherds, wanderer! on thy trace;
And boys who in lone wheatfields scare the rooks
I ask if thou hast pass'd their quiet place;
Or in my boat I lie
Moor'd to the cool bank in the summer-heats,
'Mid wide grass meadows which the sunshine fills,
And watch the warm, green-muffled Cumner hills,
And wonder if thou haunt'st their shy retreats.

For most, I know, thou lov'st retired ground!
Thee at the ferry Oxford riders blithe,
Returning home on summer-nights, have met
Crossing the stripling Thames at Bab-lock-hithe,
Trailing in the cool stream thy fingers wet,
As the punt's rope chops round;

And leaning backward in a pensive dream,
And fostering in thy lap a heap of flowers
Pluck'd in shy fields and distant Wychwood bowers,
And thine eyes resting on the moonlit stream.

And then they land, and thou art seen no more!—
Maidens, who from the distant hamlets come
To dance around the Fyfield elm in May,
Oft through the darkening fields have seen thee roam,
Or cross a stile into the public way.
Oft thou hast given them store
Of flowers—the frail-leaf'd, white anemony,
Dark bluebells drench'd with dews of summer eves,
And purple orchises with spotted leaves—
But none hath words she can report of thee.

And, above Godstow Bridge, when hay-time's here
In June, and many a scythe in sunshine flames,
Men who through those wide fields of breezy grass
Where black-wing'd swallows haunt the glittering Thames,
To bathe in the abandon'd lasher pass,
Have often pass'd thee near
Sitting upon the river bank o'ergrown;
Mark'd thine outlandish garb, thy figure spare,
Thy dark vague eyes, and soft abstracted air—
But, when they came from bathing, thou wast gone!

At some lone homestead in the Cumner hills,
Where at her open door the housewife darns,
Thou hast been seen, or hanging on a gate
To watch the threshers in the mossy barns.
Children, who early range these slopes and late
For cresses from the rills,
Have known thee eying, all an April-day,
The springing pastures and the feeding kine;
And mark'd thee, when the stars come out and shine,
Through the long dewy grass move slow away.

In autumn, on the skirts of Bagley Wood—
Where most the gipsies by the turf-edged way
Pitch their smoked tents, and every bush you see
With scarlet patches tagg'd and shreds of grey,
Above the forest-ground called Thessaly—
The blackbird, picking food,
Sees thee, nor stops his meal, nor fears at all;
So often has he known thee past him stray,
Rapt, twirling in thy hand a wither'd spray,
And waiting for the spark from heaven to fall.

And once, in winter, on the causeway chill
Where home through flooded fields foot-travellers go,
Have I not pass'd thee on the wooden bridge,
Wrapt in thy cloak and battling with the snow,
Thy face tow'rd Hinksey and its wintry ridge?
And thou hast climb'd the hill,

And gain'd the white brow of the Cumner range;
Turn'd once to watch, while thick the snow-flakes fall,
The line of festal light in Christ-Church hall—
Then sought thy straw in some sequester'd grange.

But what—I dream! Two hundred years are flown
Since first thy story ran through Oxford halls,
And the grave Glanvil did the tale inscribe
That thou wert wander'd from the studious walls
To learn strange arts, and join a gipsy-tribe;
And thou from earth art gone
Long since, and in some quiet churchyard laid—
Some country-nook, where o'er thy unknown grave
Tall grasses and white flowering nettles wave,
Under a dark, red-fruited yew-tree's shade.

—No, no, thou hast not felt the lapse of hours!
For what wears out the life of mortal men?
'Tis that from change to change their being rolls;
'Tis that repeated shocks, again, again,
Exhaust the energy of strongest souls
And numb the elastic powers.
Till having used our nerves with bliss and teen,
And tired upon a thousand schemes our wit,
To the just-pausing Genius we remit
Our worn-out life, and are—what we have been.

Thou hast no lived, why should'st thou perish,
so?
Thou hadst *one* aim, *one* business, *one* desire;
Else wert thou long since number'd with the
dead!
Else hadst thou spent, like other men, thy fire!
The generations of thy peers are fled,
And we ourselves shall go;
But thou possessest an immortal lot,
And we imagine thee exempt from age
And living as thou liv'st on Glanvil's page,
Because thou hadst—what we, alas! have not.

For early didst thou leave the world, with powers
Fresh, undiverted to the world without,
Firm to their mark, not spent on other things;
Free from the sick fatigue, the languid doubt,
Which much to have tried, in much been
baffled, brings.
O life unlike to ours!
Who fluctuate idly without term or scope,
Of whom each strives, nor knows for what
he strives,
And each half-lives a hundred different lives;
Who wait like thee, but not, like thee, in hope.

Thou waitest for the spark from heaven! and we,
Light half-believers of our casual creeds,
Who never deeply felt, nor clearly will'd,
Whose insight never has borne fruit in deeds,
Whose vague resolves never have been ful-
fill'd;
For whom each year we see

Breeds new beginnings, disappointments new;
Who hesitate and falter life away,
And lose to-morrow the ground won to-day—
Ah! do not we, wanderer! await it too?

Yes, we await it!—but it still delays,
And then we suffer! and amongstst us one,
Who most has suffer'd, takes dejectedly
His seat upon the intellectual throne;
And all his store of sad experience he
Lays bare of wretched days;
Tells us his misery's birth and growth and signs,
And how the dying spark of hope was fed,
And how the breast was soothed, and how the head,
And all his hourly varied anodynes.

This for our wisest! and we others pine,
And wish the long unhappy dream would end,
And waive all claim to bliss, and try to bear;
With close-lipp'd patience for our only friend,
Sad patience, too near neighbour to despair—
But none has hope like thine!
Thou through the fields and through the woods dost stray,
Roaming the country-side, a truant boy,
Nursing thy project in unclouded joy,
And every doubt long blown by time away.

O born in days when wits were fresh and clear,
And life ran gaily as the sparkling Thames;
Before this strange disease of modern life,

With its sick hurry, its divided aims,
Its heads o'ertax'd, its palsied hearts, was rife—
Fly hence, our contact fear!
Still fly, plunge deeper in the bowering wood!
Averse, as Dido did with gesture stern
From her false friend's approach in Hades turn,
Wave us away, and keep thy solitude!

Still nursing the unconquerable hope,
Still clutching the inviolable shade,
With a free, onward impulse brushing through,
By night, the silver'd branches of the glade—
Far on the forest-skirts, where none pursue,
On some mild pastoral slope
Emerge, and resting on the moonlit pales
Freshen thy flowers as in former years
With dew, or listen with enchanted ears,
From the dark dingles, to the nightingales!

But fly our paths, our feverish contact fly!
For strong the infection of our mental strife,
Which, though it gives no bliss, yet spoils for rest!
And we should win thee from thy own fair life,
Like us distracted, and like us unblest.
Soon, soon thy cheer would die,
Thy hopes grow timorous, and unfix'd thy powers,
And thy clear aims be cross and shifting made;
And then thy glad perennial youth would fade,
Fade, and grow old at last, and die like ours.

Then fly our greetings, fly our speech and smiles!
—As some grave Tyrian trader, from the sea,
Descried at sunrise an emerging prow
Lifting the cool-hair'd creepers stealthily,
The fringes of a southward-facing brow
Among the Ægæan isles;
And saw the merry Grecian coaster come,
Freighted with amber grapes, and Chian wine,
Green, bursting figs, and tunnies steep'd in brine—
And knew the intruders on his ancient home,

The young light-hearted masters of the waves—
And snatch'd his rudder, and shook out more sail;
And day and night held on indignantly
O'er the blue Midland waters with the gale,
Betwixt the Syrtes and soft Sicily,
To where the Atlantic raves
Outside the western straits; and unbent sails
There, where down cloudy cliffs, through sheets of foam,
Shy traffickers, the dark Iberians come;
And on the beach undid his corded bales.

Matthew Arnold.

LXIX

THYRSIS

A Monody, *to commemorate the author's friend,* Arthur Hugh Clough, *who died at Florence,* 1861.

How changed is here each spot man makes or fills!
In the two Hinkseys nothing keeps the same;
The village street its haunted mansion lacks,
And from the sign is gone Sibylla's name,
And from the roofs the twisted chimney-stacks—
Are ye too changed, ye hills?
See, 'tis no foot of unfamiliar men
To-night from Oxford up your pathway strays!
Here came I often, often, in old days—
Thyrsis and I; we still had Thyrsis then.

Runs it not here, the track by Childsworth Farm,
Past the high wood, to where the elm-tree crowns
The hill behind whose ridge the sunset flames?
The signal-elm, that looks on Ilsley Downs,
The Vale, the three lone weirs, the youthful Thames?—
This winter-eve is warm,
Humid the air! leafless, yet soft as spring,
The tender purple spray on copse and briers!
And that sweet city with her dreaming spires,
She needs not June for beauty's heightening,

Lovely all times she lies, lovely to-night!—
Only, methinks, some loss of habit's power
Befalls me wandering through this upland dim.
Once pass'd I blindfold here, at any hour;
Now seldom come I, since I came with him.
That single elm-tree bright
Against the west—I miss it! is it gone?
We prized it dearly; while it stood, we said,
Our friend, the Gipsy-Scholar, was not dead;
While the tree lived, he in these fields lived on.

Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here,
But once I knew each field, each flower, each stick;
And with the country-folk acquaintance made
By barn in threshing-time, by new-built rick.
Here, too, our shepherd-pipes we first assay'd.
Ah me! this many a year
My pipe is lost, my shepherd's holiday!
Needs must I lose them, needs with heavy heart
Into the world and wave of men depart;
But Thyrsis of his own will went away.

It irk'd him to be here, he could not rest.
He loved each simple joy the country yields,
He loved his mates; but yet he could not keep,
For that a shadow lour'd on the fields,
Here with the shepherds and the silly sheep.
Some life of men unblest

He knew, which made him droop, and fill'd
his head.
He went; his piping took a troubled sound
Of storms that rage outside our happy
ground;
He could not wait their passing, he is dead.

So, some tempestuous morn in early June,
When the year's primal burst of bloom is o'er,
Before the roses and the longest day—
When garden-walks and all the grassy floor
With blossoms red and white of fallen May
And chestnut-flowers are strewn—
So have I heard the cuckoo's parting cry,
From the wet field, through the vext garden-
trees,
Come with the volleying rain and tossing
breeze:
The bloom is gone, and with the bloom go I!

Too quick despairer, wherefore wilt thou go?
Soon will the high Midsummer pomps come on.
Soon will the musk carnations break and
swell,
Soon shall we have gold-dusted snapdragon,
Sweet-William with his homely cottage-smell,
And stocks in fragrant blow;
Roses that down the alleys shine afar,
And open, jasmine-muffled lattices,
And groups under the dreaming garden-
trees,
And the full moon, and the white evening-
star.

He hearkens not! light comer, he is flown!
What matters it? next year he will return,
And we shall have him in the sweet spring-days,
With whitening hedges, and uncrumpling fern,
And blue-bells trembling by the forest-ways,
And scent of hay new-mown.
But Thyrsis never more we swains shall see;
See him come back, and cut a smoother reed,
And blow a strain the world at last shall heed—
For Time, not Corydon, hath conquer'd thee!

Alack, for Corydon no rival now!—
But when Sicilian shepherds lost a mate,
Some good survivor with his flute would go,
Piping a ditty sad for Bion's fate;
And cross the unpermitted ferry's flow,
And relax Pluto's brow,
And make leap up with joy the beauteous head
Of Proserpine, among whose crowned hair
Are flowers first open'd on Sicilian air,
And flute his friend, like Orpheus, from the dead.

O easy access to the hearer's grace
When Dorian shepherds sang to Proserpine!
For she herself had trod Sicilian fields,
She knew the Dorian water's gush divine,
She knew each lily white which Enna yields,
Each rose with blushing face;
She loved the Dorian pipe, the Dorian strain.
But ah, of our poor Thames she never heard!
Her foot the Cumner cowslips never stirr'd;
And we should tease her with our plaint in vain!

Well! wind-dispersed and vain the words will be,
Yet, Thyrsis, let me give my grief its hour
In the old haunt, and find our tree-topp'd hill!
Who, if not I, for questing here hath power?
I know the wood which hides the daffodil,
I know the Fyfield tree,
I know what white, what purple fritillaries
The grassy harvest of the river-fields,
Above by Ensham, down by Sandford, yields,
And what sedged brooks are Thames's tributaries;

I know these slopes; who knows them if not I?—
But many a dingle on the loved hill-side,
With thorns once studded, old, white-blossom'd trees,
Where thick the cowslips grew, and far descried
High tower'd the spikes of purple orchises,
Hath since our day put by
The coronals of that forgotten time;
Down each green bank hath gone the ploughboy's team,
And only in the hidden brookside gleam
Primroses, orphans of the flowery prime.

Where is the girl, who by the boatman's door,
Above the locks, above the boating throng,
Unmoor'd our skiff when through the Wytham flats,
Red loosestrife and blond meadow-sweet among
And darting swallows and light water-gnats,
We track'd the shy Thames shore?

Where are the mowers, who, as the tiny swell
Of our boat passing heaved the river-grass,
Stood with suspended scythe to see us pass?—
They all are gone, and thou art gone as well!

Yes, thou art gone! and round me too the night
In ever-nearing circle weaves her shade.
I see her veil draw soft across the day,
I feel her slowly chilling breath invade
The cheek grown thin, the brown hair sprent with grey;
I feel her finger light
Laid pausefully upon life's headlong train;—
The foot less prompt to meet the morning dew,
The heart less bounding at emotion new,
And hope, once crush'd, less quick to spring again.

And long the way appears, which seem'd so short
To the less practised eye of sanguine youth;
And high the mountain-tops, in cloudy air,
The mountain-tops where is the throne of Truth,
Tops in life's morning-sun so bright and bare!
Unbreachable the fort
Of the long-batter'd world uplifts its wall;
And strange and vain the earthly turmoil grows,
And near and real the charm of thy repose,
And night as welcome as a friend would fall.

But hush! the upland hath a sudden loss
Of quiet!—Look, adown the dusk hill-side,
A troop of Oxford hunters going home,
As in old days, jovial and talking, ride!
From hunting with the Berkshire hounds they come.
Quick! let me fly, and cross
Into yon farther field!—'Tis done; and see,
Back'd by the sunset, which doth glorify
The orange and pale violet evening-sky,
Bare on its lonely ridge, the Tree! the Tree!

I take the omen! Eve lets down her veil,
The white fog creeps from bush to bush about,
The west unflushes, the high stars grow bright,
And in the scatter'd farms the lights come out.
I cannot reach the signal-tree to-night,
Yet, happy omen, hail!
Hear it from thy broad lucent Arno-vale
(For there thine earth-forgetting eyelids keep
The morningless and unawakening sleep
Under the flowery oleanders pale),

Hear it, O Thyrsis, still our tree is there!—
Ah, vain! These English fields, this upland dim,
These brambles pale with mist engarlanded,
That lone, sky-pointing tree, are not for him;
To a boon southern country he is fled,
And now in happier air,
Wandering with the great Mother's train divine
(And purer or more subtle soul than thee,
I trow, the mighty Mother doth not see)
Within a folding of the Apennine,

Thou hearest the immortal chants of old!—
Putting his sickle to the perilous grain
In the hot cornfield of the Phrygian king,
For thee the Lityerses-song again
Young Daphnis with his silver voice doth sing;
Sings his Sicilian fold,
His sheep, his hapless love, his blinded eyes—
And how a call celestial round him rang,
And heavenward from the fountain-brink he sprang,
And all the marvel of the golden skies.

There thou art gone, and me thou leavest here
Sole in these fields! yet will I not despair.
Despair I will not, while I yet descry
'Neath the mild canopy of English air
That lonely tree against the western sky.
Still, still these slopes, 'tis clear,
Our Gipsy-Scholar haunts, outliving thee!
Fields where soft sheep from cages pull the hay,
Woods with anemonies in flower till May,
Know him a wanderer still; then why not me?

A fugitive and gracious light he seeks,
Shy to illumine; and I seek it too.
This does not come with houses or with gold,
With place, with honour, and a flattering crew;
'Tis not in the world's market bought and sold—
But the smooth-slipping weeks

Drop by, and leave its seeker still untired;
Out of the heed of mortals he is gone,
He wends unfollow'd, he must house alone;
Yet on he fares, by his own heart inspired.

Thou too, O Thyrsis, on like quest wast bound;
Thou wanderedst with me for a little hour!
Men gave thee nothing; but this happy quest,
If men esteem'd thee feeble, gave thee power,
If men procured thee trouble, gave thee rest.
And this rude Cumner ground,
Its fir-topped Hurst, its farms, its quiet fields,
Here cam'st thou in thy jocund youthful time,
Here was thine height of strength, thy golden prime!
And still the haunt beloved a virtue yields.

What though the music of thy rustic flute
Kept not for long its happy, country tone;
Lost it too soon, and learnt a stormy note
Of men contention-tost, of men who groan,
Which task'd thy pipe too sore, and tired thy throat—
It fail'd, and thou wast mute!
Yet hadst thou alway visions of our light,
And long with men of care thou couldst not stay,
And soon thy foot resumed its wandering way,
Left human haunt, and on alone till night.

Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here!
'Mid city-noise, not, as with thee of yore,
Thyrsis! in reach of sheep-bells is my home.
—Then through the great town's harsh, heart-wearying roar,
Let in thy voice a whisper often come,
To chase fatigue and fear:
Why faintest thou? I wander'd till I died.
Roam on! The light we sought is shining still.
Dost thou ask proof? Our tree yet crowns the hill,
Our Scholar travels yet the loved hill-side.

Matthew Arnold.

LXX

FRATER AVE ATQUE VALE

Row us out from Desenzano, to your Sirmione row!
So they row'd, and there we landed—"O venusta Sirmio!"
There to me thro' all the groves of olive in the summer glow,
There beneath the Roman ruin where the purple flowers grow,
Came that "Ave atque Vale" of the Poet's hopeless woe,
Tenderest of Roman poets nineteen hundred years ago,

"Frater Ave atque Vale"—as we wander'd to and fro
Gazing at the Lydian laughter of the Garda Lake below,
Sweet Catullus' all-but-island, olive-silvery Sirmio!

Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

LXXI

TO VIRGIL

Roman Virgil, thou that singest
Ilion's lofty temples robed in fire,
Ilion falling, Rome arising,
wars, and filial faith, and Dido's pyre;

Landscape-lover, lord of language
more than he that sang the Works and Days,
All the chosen coin of fancy
flashing out from many a golden phrase;

Thou that singest wheat and woodland,
tilth and vineyard, hive and horse and herd;
All the charm of all the Muses
often flowering in a lonely word;

Poet of the happy Tityrus
piping underneath his beechen bowers;
Poet of the poet-satyr
whom the laughing shepherd bound with flowers;

Chanter of the Pollio, glorying
in the blissful years again to be,
Summers of the snakeless meadow,
unlaborious earth and oarless sea;

Thou that seëst Universal
Nature moved by Universal Mind;
Thou majestic in thy sadness
at the doubtful doom of human kind;

Light among the vanish'd ages;
star that gildest yet this phantom shore;
Golden branch amid the shadows,
kings and realms that pass to rise no more;

Now thy Forum roars no longer,
fallen every purple Cæsar's dome—
Tho' thine ocean-roll of rhythm
sound for ever of Imperial Rome—

Now the Rome of slaves hath perish'd,
and the Rome of freemen holds her place,
I, from out the Northern Island
sunder'd once from all the human race,

I salute thee, Mantovano,
I that loved thee since my day began,
Wielder of the stateliest measure
ever moulded by the lips of man.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

LXXII

THE WOODSPURGE

THE wind flapped loose, the wind was still,
Shaken out dead from tree and hill:
I had walked on at the wind's will,—
I sat now, for the wind was still.

Between my knees my forehead was,—
My lips, drawn in, said not Alas!
My hair was over in the grass,
My naked ears heard the day pass.

My eyes, wide open, had the run
Of some ten weeds to fix upon;
Among those few, out of the sun,
The woodspurge flowered, three cups in one.

From perfect grief there need not be
Wisdom or even memory:
One thing then learnt remains to me,—
The woodspurge has a cup of three.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

LXXIII

GRIEF

I TELL you, hopeless grief is passionless;
That only men incredulous of despair,
Half-taught in anguish, through the midnight air
Beat upward to God's throne in loud access

Of shrieking and reproach. Full desertness
In souls, as countries, lieth silent-bare
Under the blanching, vertical eye-glare
Of the absolute Heavens. Deep-hearted man, express
Grief for thy Dead in silence like to death:
Most like a monumental statue set
In everlasting watch and moveless woe,
Till itself crumble to the dust beneath.
Touch it: the marble eyelids are not wet;
If it could weep, it could arise and go.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

LXXIV

THE CITY OF DREADFUL NIGHT

How the moon triumphs through the endless nights!
How the stars throb and glitter as they wheel
Their thick processions of supernal lights
Around the blue vault obdurate as steel!
And men regard with passionate awe and yearning
The mighty marching and the golden burning,
And think the heavens respond to what they feel.

Boats gliding like dark shadows of a dream,
Are glorified from vision as they pass
The quivering moonbridge on the deep black stream;
Cold windows kindle their dead glooms of glass

To restless crystals; cornice, dome, and column
Emerge from chaos in the splendour solemn;
  Like faëry lakes gleam lawns of dewy grass.

With such a living light these dead eyes shine,
  These eyes of sightless heaven, that as we gaze
We read a pity, tremulous, divine,
  Or cold majestic scorn in their pure rays:
Fond man! they are not haughty, are not tender;
There is no heart or mind in all their splendour,
  They thread mere puppets all their marvellous maze.

If we could near them with the flight unflown,
  We should but find them worlds as sad as this,
Or suns all self-consuming like our own
  Enringed by planet worlds as much amiss:
They wax and wane through fusion and confusion;
The spheres eternal are a grand illusion,
  The empyrean is a void abyss.

James Thomson.

LXXV

CONFESSIONS

What is he buzzing in my ears?
  "Now that I come to die,
Do I view the world as a vale of tears?"
  Ah, reverend sir, not I!

What I viewed there once, what I view again
  Where the physic bottles stand

On the table's edge, is a suburb lane,
With a wall to my bedside hand.

That lane sloped, much as the bottles do,
From a house you could descry
O'er the garden wall: is the curtain blue
Or green to a healthy eye?

To mine, it serves for the old June weather
Blue above land and wall;
And that farthest bottle labelled "Ether"
Is the house o'ertopping all.

At a terrace somewhere near the stopper,
There watched for me, one June,
A girl: I know, sir, it's improper,
My poor mind's out of tune.

Only, there was a way . . . you crept
Close by the side, to dodge
Eyes in the house, two eyes except:
They styled their house "The Lodge."

What right had a lounger up their lane?
But, by creeping very close,
With the good wall's help,—their eyes might strain
And stretch themselves to Oes,

Yet never catch her and me together,
As she left the attic, there,
By the rim of the bottle labelled "Ether,"
And stole from stair to stair,

And stood by the rose-wreathed gate. Alas,
We loved, sir—used to meet:
How sad and bad and mad it was—
But then, how it was sweet!

Robert Browning.

LXXVI

THE WOODCUTTER'S NIGHT-SONG

Welcome, red and roundy sun,
Dropping lowly in the west;
Now my hard day's work is done,
I'm as happy as the best.

Joyful are the thoughts of home,
Now I'm ready for my chair,
So, till morrow-morning's come,
Bill and mittens, lie ye there!

Though to leave your pretty song,
Little birds, it gives me pain,
Yet to-morrow is not long,
Then I'm with you all again.

If I stop, and stand about,
Well I know how things will be,
Judy will be looking out
Every now-and-then for me.

So fare ye well! and hold your tongues,
Sing no more until I come;
They're not worthy of your songs
That never care to drop a crumb.

All day long I love the oaks,
  But, at nights, yon little cot,
Where I see the chimney smokes,
  Is by far the prettiest spot.

Wife and children all are there,
  To revive with pleasant looks,
Table ready set, and chair,
  Supper hanging on the hooks.

Soon as ever I get in,
  When my faggot down I fling,
Little prattlers they begin
  Teasing me to talk and sing.

Welcome, red and roundy sun,
  Dropping lowly in the west;
Now my hard day's work is done,
  I'm as happy as the best.

Joyful are the thoughts of home,
  Now I'm ready for my chair,
So, till morrow-morning's come,
  Bill and mittens, lie ye there!

John Clare.

LXXVII

WOAK HILL

When sycamore leaves wer a-spreadèn
  Green-ruddy in hedges,
Bezide the red doust o' the ridges,
  A-dried at Woak Hill;

I pack'd up my goods, all a-sheenèn
Wi' long years o' handlèn,
On dousty red wheels ov a waggon,
To ride at Woak Hill.

The brown thatchen ruf o' the dwellèn
I then wer a-leaven,
Had shelter'd the sleek head o' Meäry,
My bride at Woak Hill.

But now vor zome years, her light voot-vall
'S a-lost vrom the vloorèn.
To soon vor my jaÿ an' my childern
She died at Woak Hill.

But still I do think that, in soul,
She do hover about us;
To ho vor her motherless childern,
Her pride at Woak Hill.

Zoo—lest she should tell me hereafter
I stole off 'ithout her,
An' left her, uncall'd at house-riddèn,
To bide at Woak Hill—

I call'd her so fondly, wi' lippèns
All soundless to others,
An' took her wi' air-reachèn hand
To my zide at Woak Hill.

On the road I did look round, a-talkèn
To light at my shoulder,
An' then led her in at the doorway,
Miles wide vrom Woak Hill.

An' that's why vo'k thought, vor a season,
My mind wer a-wandrèn
Wi' sorrow, when I wer so sorely
A-tried at Woak Hill.

But no; that my Meäry mid never
Behold herzelf slighted,
I wanted to think that I guided
My guide vrom Woak Hill.

William Barnes.

LXXVIII

THE SANDS OF DEE

"O Mary, go and call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home
Across the sands of Dee;"
The western wind was wild and dank with foam,
And all alone went she.

The western tide crept up along the sand,
And o'er and o'er the sand,
And round and round the sand,
As far as eye could see.
The rolling mist came down and hid the land
And never home came she.

"Oh! is it weed, or fish, or floating hair—
A tress of golden hair,
A drownèd maiden's hair
Above the nets at sea?

Was never salmon yet that shone so fair
  Among the stakes on Dee."

They rowed her in across the rolling foam,
    The cruel crawling foam,
    The cruel hungry foam,
  To her grave beside the sea:
But still the boatmen hear her call the cattle home
  Across the sands of Dee.

Charles Kingsley.

LXXIX

A LITTLE while, a little while,
  The weary task is put away,
And I can sing and I can smile,
  Alike, while I have holiday.

Where wilt thou go, my harassed heart—
  What thought, what scene invites thee now?
What spot, or near or far apart,
  Has rest for thee, my weary brow?

There is a spot, 'mid barren hills,
  Where winter howls, and driving rain;
But, if the dreary tempest chills,
  There is a light that warms again.

The house is old, the trees are bare,
  Moonless above bends twilight's dome;
But what on earth is half so dear,
  So longed for, as the hearth of home?

The mute bird sitting on the stone,
  The dank moss dripping from the wall,
The thorn-trees gaunt, the walks o'ergrown,
  I love them, how I love them all!

Still, as I mused, the naked room,
  The alien firelight died away;
And from the midst of cheerless gloom,
  I passed to bright, unclouded day.

A little and a lone green lane
  That opened on a common wide;
A distant, dreamy, dim blue chain
  Of mountains circling every side:

A heaven so clear, an earth so calm,
  So sweet, so soft, so hushed an air;
And, deepening still the dream-like charm,
  Wild moor-sheep feeding everywhere.

That was the scene, I knew it well;
  I knew the turfy pathway's sweep,
That, winding o'er each billowy swell,
  Marked out the tracks of wandering sheep.

Even as I stood with raptured eye,
  Absorbed in bliss so deep and dear,
My hour of rest had fleeted by,
  And back came labour, bondage, care.

Emily Brontë.

LXXX

THE SHRINE

THERE is a shrine whose golden gate
  Was opened by the Hand of God;
It stands serene, inviolate,
  Though millions have its pavement trod;
As fresh, as when the first sunrise
Awoke the lark in Paradise.

'Tis compassed with the dust and toil
  Of common days, yet should there fall
A single speck, a single soil
  Upon the whiteness of its wall,
The angels' tears in tender rain
Would make the temple theirs again.

Without, the world is tired and old,
  But, once within the enchanted door,
The mists of time are backward rolled,
  And creeds and ages are no more;
But all the human-hearted meet
In one communion vast and sweet.

I enter—all is simply fair,
  Nor incense-clouds, nor carven throne;
But in the fragrant morning air
  A gentle lady sits alone;
My mother—ah! whom should I see
Within, save ever only thee?

Digby Mackworth Dolben.

LXXXI

MOTHER AND SON

Now sleeps the land of houses,
and dead night holds the street,
And there thou liest, my baby,
and sleepest soft and sweet;
My man is away for awhile,
but safe and alone we lie,
And none heareth thy breath but thy mother,
and the moon looking down from the sky
On the weary waste of the town,
as it looked on the grass-edged road
Still warm with yesterday's sun,
when I left my old abode;
Hand in hand with my love,
that night of all nights in the year;
When the river of love o'erflowed
and drowned all doubt and fear,
And we two were alone in the world,
and once if never again,
We knew of the secret of earth
and the tale of its labour and pain.

Lo amidst London I lift thee,
and how little and light thou art,
And thou without hope or fear
thou fear and hope of my heart!
Lo here thy body beginning,
O son, and thy soul and thy life;
But how will it be if thou livest,
and enterest into the strife,

And in love we dwell together
when the man is grown in thee,
When thy sweet speech I shall hearken,
and yet 'twixt thee and me
Shall rise that wall of distance,
that round each one doth grow,
And maketh it hard and bitter
each other's thought to know?
Now, therefore, while yet thou art little
and hast no thought of thine own,
I will tell thee a word of the world,
of the hope whence thou hast grown;
Of the love that once begat thee,
of the sorrow that hath made
Thy little heart of hunger,
and thy hands on my bosom laid.
Then mayst thou remember hereafter
as whiles when people say
All this hath happened before
in the life of another day;
So mayst thou dimly remember
this tale of thy mother's voice,
As oft in the calm of dawning
I have heard the birds rejoice,
As oft I have heard the storm-wind
go moaning through the wood;
And I knew that earth was speaking,
and the mother's voice was good.

Now, to thee alone will I tell it
that thy mother's body is fair,
In the guise of the country maidens
who play with the sun and the air;

Who have stood in the row of the reapers
in the August afternoon,
Who have sat by the frozen water
in the high day of the moon,
When the lights of the Christmas feasting
were dead in the house on the hill,
And the wild geese gone to the salt-marsh
had left the winter still.
Yea, I am fair, my firstling;
if thou couldst but remember me!
The hair that thy small hand clutcheth
is a goodly sight to see;
I am true, but my face is a snare;
soft and deep are my eyes,
And they seem for men's beguiling
fulfilled with the dreams of the wise.
Kind are my lips, and they look
as though my soul had learned
Deep things I have never heard of,
my face and my hands are burned
By the lovely sun of the acres;
three months of London town
And thy birth-bed have bleached them indeed,
"But lo, where the edge of the gown"
(So said thy father) "is parting
the wrist that is white as the curd
From the brown of the hand that I love,
bright as the wing of a bird."

Such is thy mother, O firstling,
yet strong as the maidens of old,
Whose spears and whose swords were the warders
of homestead, of field and of fold.

Oft were my feet on the highway,
often they wearied the grass;
From dusk unto dusk of the summer
three times in a week would I pass
To the downs from the house on the river
through the waves of the blossoming corn.
Fair then I lay down in the even,
and fresh I arose on the morn,
And scarce in the noon was I weary.
Ah, son, in the days of thy strife,
If thy soul could but harbour a dream
of the blossom of my life!
It would be as the sunlit meadows
beheld from a tossing sea,
And the soul should look on a vision
of the peace that is to be.

Yet, yet the tears on my cheek!
and what is this doth move
My heart to thy heart, beloved,
save the flood of yearning love?
For fair and fierce is thy father,
and soft and strange are his eyes
That look on the day that shall be
with the hope of the brave and the wise.
It was many a day that we laughed,
as over the meadows we walked,
And many a day I hearkened
and the pictures came as he talked;
It was many a day that we longed,
and we lingered late at eve
Ere speech from speech was sundered,
and my hand his hand could leave.

Then I wept when I was alone,
and I longed till the daylight came;
And down the stairs I stole,
and there was our housekeeping dame
(No mother of me, the foundling)
kindling the fire betimes
Ere the haymaking folk went forth
to the meadows down by the limes;
All things I saw at a glance;
the quickening fire-tongues leapt
Through the crackling heap of sticks,
and the sweet smoke up from it crept,
And close to the very hearth
the low sun flooded the floor,
And the cat and her kittens played
in the sun by the open door.
The garden was fair in the morning,
and there in the road he stood
Beyond the crimson daisies
and the bush of southernwood.
Then side by side together
through the grey-walled place we went,
And O the fear departed,
and the rest and sweet content!

Son, sorrow and wisdom he taught me,
and sore I grieved and learned
As we twain grew into one;
and the heart within me burned
With the very hopes of his heart.
Ah, son, it is piteous,
But never again in my life
shall I dare to speak to thee thus;

So may these lonely words
about thee creep and cling,
These words of the lonely night
in the days of our wayfaring.
Many a child of woman
to-night is born in the town,
The desert of folly and wrong;
and of what and whence are they grown?
Many and many an one
of wont and use is born;
For a husband is taken to bed
as a hat or a ribbon is worn.
Prudence begets her thousands;
"good is a housekeeper's life,
So shall I sell my body
that I may be matron and wife."
"And I shall endure foul wedlock
and bear the children of need."
Some are there born of hate,
many the children of greed.
"I, I too can be wedded,
though thou my love hast got."
"I am fair and hard of heart,
and riches shall be my lot."
And all these are the good and the happy,
on whom the world dawns fair.
O son, when wilt thou learn
of those that are born of despair,
As the fabled mud of the Nile
that quickens under the sun
With a growth of creeping things,
half dead when just begun?

E'en such is the care of Nature
that man should never die,
Though she breed of the fools of the earth,
and the dregs of the city sty.
But thou, O son, O son,
of very love wert born,
when our hope fulfilled bred hope,
and fear was a folly outworn.
On the eve of the toil and the battle
all sorrow and grief we weighed,
We hoped and we were not ashamed,
we knew and we were not afraid.

Now waneth the night and the moon;
ah, son, it is piteous
That never again in my life
shall I dare to speak to thee thus.
But sure from the wise and the simple
shall the mighty come to birth;
And fair were my fate, beloved,
if I be yet on the earth
When the world is awakened at last,
and from mouth to mouth they tell
Of thy love and thy deeds and thy valour,
and thy hope that nought can quell.

William Morris.

LXXXII

AIRLY BEACON

Airly Beacon, Airly Beacon;
Oh the pleasant sight to see

Shires and towns from Airly Beacon,
While my love climbed up to me!

Airly Beacon, Airly Beacon;
Oh the happy hours we lay
Deep in fern on Airly Beacon,
Courting through the summer's day!

Airly Beacon, Airly Beacon;
Oh the weary haunt for me,
All alone on Airly Beacon,
With his baby on my knee!

Charles Kingsley.

LXXXIII

THE TOYS

My little Son, who look'd from thoughtful eyes
And moved and spoke in quiet grown-up wise,
Having my law the seventh time disobey'd,
I struck him, and dismiss'd
With hard words and unkiss'd,
His Mother, who was patient, being dead.
Then, fearing lest his grief should hinder sleep,
I visited his bed,
But found him slumbering deep,
With darken'd eyelids, and their lashes yet
From his late sobbing wet.
And I, with moan,
Kissing away his tears, left others of my own;

For, on a table drawn beside his head,
He had put, within his reach,
A box of counters and a red-vein'd stone,
A piece of glass abraded by the beach
And six or seven shells,
A bottle with bluebells
And two French copper coins, ranged there with careful art,
To comfort his sad heart.
So when that night I pray'd
To God, I wept, and said:
Ah, when at last we lie with trancèd breath,
Not vexing Thee in death,
And thou rememberest of what toys
We made our joys,
How weakly understood,
Thy great commanded good,
Then, fatherly not less
Than I whom thou hast moulded from the clay,
Thou'lt leave Thy wrath, and say,
"I will be sorry for their childishness."

Coventry Patmore.

LXXXIV

OMAR'S LAMENT

Alas, that Spring should vanish with the Rose!
That Youth's sweet-scented Manuscript should close!
The Nightingale that in the branches sang,
Ah, whence, and whither flown again, who knows!

Ah Love! could thou and I with Fate conspire
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,
Would not we shatter it to bits—and then
Re-mould it nearer to the Heart's Desire?

Edward FitzGerald.

LXXXV

DREAMS

It looks as if in dreams the soul was free,
No bodily limit checks its absolute play;
Then why doth it not use its liberty,
And clear a certain way
To further truth beyond the actual sea?

It is not so; for when, with loosened grip,
The warder sense unlocks the visible hold,
Then will my soul from forth its chamber slip,
An idiot blithe and bold,
And into vacancy of folly skip;

Or aimless wander on the poppied floor
Of gaudy fields, or, scarce upon the street,
Return unto the grim, familiar door,
And, coward, crave retreat,
As who had never been outside before.

What boots it that I hold the chartered space,
If I but fill it with th' accustomed forms,
And load its breathless essence with the trace
Of casual-risen storms,
And drag my chain along the lovely place?

O, but if God would make a deep suspense,
And draw me perfect from th' adhesive sheath;
If all the veils and swathings of pretence,
Dropt from me, sunk beneath,
Then would I get me very far from hence.

I'd come to Him with one swift arrow-dart,
Aimed at the zenith of th' o'erbrooding blue;
Straight to the centre of His awful heart
The flight long-winged and true
Should bear me rapt through all the spheres that part.

But as it is, it is a waste of rest.
God uses not the occasion; on the rock
Stands prone my soul, a diver lean undrest,
And looks, and fears the shock,
And turns and hides its shame with some poor sorry jest.

Thomas Edward Brown.

LXXXVI

LOST DAYS

The lost days of my life until to-day,
What were they, could I see them on the street
Lie as they fell? Would they be ears of wheat
Sown once for food but trodden into clay?
Or golden coins squandered and still to pay?
Or drops of blood dabbling the guilty feet?
Or such split water as in dreams must cheat
The undying throats of Hell, athirst alway?

I do not see them here; but after death
God knows I know the faces I shall see,
Each one a murdered self, with low last breath.
"I am thyself,—what hast thou done to me?"
"And I—and I—thyself," (lo! each one saith,)
"And thou thyself to all eternity!"

Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

LXXXVII

Say not the struggle nought availeth,
The labour and the wounds are vain,
The enemy faints not, nor faileth,
And as things have been they remain.

If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars;
It may be, in yon smoke concealed,
Your comrades chase e'en now the fliers,
And, but for you, possess the field.

For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
Comes silent, flooding in, the main.

And not by eastern windows only,
When the daylight comes, comes in the light,
In front, the sun climbs slow, how slowly,
But westward, look, the land is bright!

Arthur Hugh Clough.

LXXXVIII

THE PAGAN WORLD

In his cool hall, with haggard eyes,
The Roman noble lay;
He drove abroad, in furious guise,
Along the Appian way.

He made a feast, drank fierce and fast,
And crown'd his hair with flowers—
No easier nor no quicker pass'd
The impracticable hours.

The brooding East with awe beheld
Her impious younger world.
The Roman tempest swell'd and swell'd,
And on her head was hurl'd.

The East bow'd low before the blast
In patient, deep disdain;
She let the legions thunder past,
And plunged in thought again.

So well she mused, a morning broke
Across her spirit grey;
A conquering, new-born joy awoke,
And fill'd her life with day.

"Poor world," she cried, "so deep acurst
That runn'st from pole to pole
To seek a draught to slake thy thirst—
Go, seek it in thy soul!"

She heard it, the victorious West,
In crown and sword array'd!
She felt the void which mined her breast,
She shiver'd and obey'd.

She veil'd her eagles, snapp'd her sword,
And laid her sceptre down;
Her stately purple she abhorr'd,
And her imperial crown.

She broke her flutes, she stopp'd her sports,
Her artists could not please;
She tore her books, she shut her courts,
She fled her palaces;

Lust of the eye and pride of life
She left it all behind,
And hurried, torn with inward strife,
The wilderness to find.

Tears wash'd the trouble from her face!
She changed into a child!
'Mid weeds and wrecks she stood—a place
Of ruin—but she smiled!

Matthew Arnold.

LXXXIX

HE WOULD HAVE HIS LADY SING

Sing me the men ere this
Who, to the gate that is
A cloven pearl unrapt,

The big white bars between
with dying eyes have seen
The sea of jasper, lapt
About with crystal sheen;

And all the far pleasance
Where linkèd Angels dance,
With scarlet wings that fall
Magnifical, or spread
Most sweetly over-head,
In fashion musical,
Of cadenced lutes instead.

Sing me the town they saw
Withouten fleck or flaw,
Aflame, more fine than glass
Of fair Abbayes the boast,
More glad than wax of cost
Doth make at Candlemas
The Lifting of the Host:

Where many Knights and Dames,
With new and wondrous names,
One great Laudate Psalm
Go singing down the street;—
'Tis peace upon their feet,
In hand 'tis pilgrim palm
Of Goddess Land so sweet:—

Where Mother Mary walks
In silver lily stalks,
Star-tired, moon-bedight;

Where Cecily is seen,
With Dorothy in green,
And Magdalen all white,
The Maidens of the Queen.

Sing on—the Steps untrod,
The Temple that is God,
Where incense doth ascend,
Where mount the cries and tears
Of all the dolorous years,
With moan that ladies send
Of durance and sore fears:—

And Him who sitteth there,
The Christ of purple hair,
And great eyes deep with ruth,
Who is of all things fair
That shall be, or that were,
The sum, and very truth.
Then add a little prayer,

That since all these be so,
Our Liege, who doth us know,
Would fend from Sathanas,
And bring us, of His grace,
To that His joyous place:
So we the Doom may pass,
And see Him in the Face.

Digby Mackworth Dolben.

XC

THE BLESSED DAMOZEL

THE blessed damozel leaned out
From the gold bar of Heaven;
Her eyes were deeper than the depth
Of waters stilled at even;
She had three lilies in her hand,
And the stars in her hair were seven.

Her robe, ungirt from clasp to hem,
No wrought flowers did adorn,
But a white rose of Mary's gift,
For service meetly worn;
Her hair that lay along her back
Was yellow like ripe corn.

Herseemed she scarce had been a day
One of God's choristers;
The wonder was not yet quite gone
From that still look of hers;
Albeit, to them she left, her day
Had counted as ten years.

(To one, it is ten years of years.
. . . Yet now, and in this place,
Surely she leaned o'er me—her hair
Fell all about my face. . . .
Nothing: the autumn-fall of leaves.
The whole year sets apace.)

It was the rampart of God's house
That she was standing on;
By God built over the sheer depth
The which is Space begun;
So high, that looking downward thence
She scarce could seen the sun.

It lies in Heaven, across the flood
Of ether, as a bridge.
Beneath, the tides of day and night
With flame and darkness ridge
The void, as low as where this earth
Spins like a fretful midge.

Around her, lovers, newly met
'Mid deathless love's acclaims,
Spoke evermore among themselves
Their heart-remembered names;
And the souls mounting up to God
Went by her like thin flames.

And still she bowed herself and stooped
Out of the circling charm;
Until her bosom must have made
The bar she leaned on warm,
And the lilies lay as if asleep
Along her bended arm.

From the fixed place of Heaven she saw
Time like a pulse shake fierce
Through all the worlds. Her gaze still strove
Within the gulf to pierce
Its path; and now she spoke as when
The stars sang in their spheres.

The sun was gone now; the curled moon
  Was like a little feather
Fluttering far down the gulf, and now
  She spoke through the still weather.
Her voice was like the voice the stars
  Had when they sang together.

(Ah sweet! Even now, in that bird's song
  Strove not her accents there,
Fain to be hearkened? When those bells
  Possessed the midday air,
Strove not her steps to reach my side
  Down all the echoing stair?)

"I wish that he were come to me,
  For he will come," she said.
"Have I not prayed in Heaven?—on earth,
  Lord, Lord, has he not pray'd?
Are not two prayers a perfect strength?
  And shall I feel afraid?

"When round his head the aureole clings,
  And he is clothed in white,
I'll take his hand and go with him
  To the deep wells of light;
As unto a stream we will step down,
  And bathe there in God's sight.

"We two will stand beside that shrine,
  Occult, withheld, untrod,
Whose lamps are stirred continually
  With prayer sent up to God;
And see our old prayers, granted, melt
  Each like a little cloud.

"We two will lie i' the shadow of
That living mystic tree
Within whose secret growth the Dove
Is sometimes felt to be.
While every leaf that His plumes touch
Saith His Name audibly.

"And I myself will teach to him,
I myself, lying so,
The songs I sing here; which his voice
Shall pause in, hushed and slow,
And find some knowledge at each pause,
Or some new thing to know."

(Alas! we two, we two, thou say'st!
Yea, one wast thou with me
That once of old. But shall God lift
To endless unity
The soul whose likeness with thy soul
Was but its love for thee?)

"We two," she said, "will seek the groves
Where the lady Mary is,
With her five handmaidens, whose names
Are five sweet symphonies,
Cecily, Gertrude, Magdalen,
Margaret and Rosalys.

"Circlewise sit they, with bound locks
And foreheads garlanded;
Into the fine cloth white like flame
Weaving the golden thread,
To fashion the birth-robes for them
Who are just born, being dead.

"He shall fear, haply and be dumb.
Then will I lay my cheek
To his, and tell about our love,
Not once abashed or weak:
And the dear Mother will approve
My pride, and let me speak.

"Herself shall bring us, hand in hand,
To Him round whom all souls
Kneel, the clear-ranged unnumbered heads
Bowed with their aureoles:
And angels meeting us shall sing
To their citherns and citoles.

"There will I ask of Christ the Lord
Thus much for him and me:—
Only to live as once on earth
With Love,—only to be,
As then awhile, for ever now
Together, I and he."

She gazed and listened and then said,
Less sad of speech than mild,—
"All this is when he comes." She ceased.
The light thrilled towards her, fill'd
With angels in strong level flight.
Her eyes prayed, and she smil'd.

(I saw her smile.) But soon their path
Was vague in distant spheres:
And then she cast her arms along
The golden barriers,
And laid her face between her hands,
And wept. (I heard her tears.)

Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

XCI

MIMNERMUS IN CHURCH

You promise heavens free from strife,
  Pure truth, and perfect change of will;
But sweet, sweet is this human life,
  So sweet, I fain would breathe it still;
Your chilly stars I can forgo,
This warm kind world is all I know.

You say there is no substance here,
  One great reality above:
Back from that void I shrink in fear,
  And child-like hide myself in love:
Show me what angels feel. Till then,
I cling, a mere weak man, to men.

You bid me lift my mean desires
  From faltering lips and fitful veins
To sexless souls, ideal quires,
  Unwearied voices, wordless strains:
My mind with fonder welcome owns
One dear dead friend's remembered tones.

Forsooth the present we must give
  To that which cannot pass away;
All beauteous things for which we live
  By laws of time and space decay.
But oh, the very reason why
I clasp them, is because they die.

William Cory.

XCII

THE OLD STOIC

RICHES I hold in light esteem,
And Love I laugh to scorn;
And lust of fame was but a dream,
That vanished with the morn:

And if I pray, the only prayer
That moves my lips for me
Is, "Leave the heart that now I bear
And give me liberty!"

Yes, as my swift days near their goal,
'Tis all that I implore;
In life and death a chainless soul,
With courage to endure.

Emily Brontë.

XCIII

IN spring and summer winds may blow,
And rains fall after, hard and fast;
The tender leaves, if beaten low,
Shine but the more for shower and blast.

But when their fated hour arrives,
When reapers long have left the field,
When maidens rifle turn'd-up hives,
And their last juice fresh apples yield,

A leaf perhaps may still remain
Upon some solitary tree,
Spite of the wind and of the rain . . .
A thing you heed not if you see.

At last it falls. Who cares? Not one:
And yet no power on earth can ever
Replace the fallen leaf upon
Its spray, so easy to dissever.

If such be love, I dare not say.
Friendship is such, too well I know:
I have enjoyed my summer day;
'Tis past; my leaf now lies below.

Walter Savage Landor.

XCIV

QUA CURSUM VENTUS

As ships, becalmed at eve, that lay
With canvas drooping, side by side,
Two towers of sail at dawn of day
Are scarce long leagues apart descried;

When fell the night, upsprung the breeze,
And all the darkling hours they plied,
Nor dreamt but each the self-same seas
By each was cleaving, side by side:

E'en so—but why the tale reveal
  Of those whom, year by year unchanged,
Brief absence joined anew to feel,
  Astounded, soul from soul estranged?

At dead of night their sails were filled,
  And onward each rejoicing steered—
Ah, neither blame, for neither willed,
  Or wist, what first with dawn appeared!

To veer, how vain! On, onward strain,
  Brave barks! In light, in darkness too,
Through winds and tides one compass guides—
  To that, and your own selves, be true.

But O blithe breeze! and O great seas,
  Though ne'er, that earliest parting past,
On your wide plain they join again,
  Together lead them home at last.

One port, methought, alike they sought,
  One purpose hold where'er they fare,—
O bounding breeze, O rushing seas!
  At last, at last, unite them there!

Arthur Hugh Clough.

XCV

SONG

The feathers of the willow
Are half of them grown yellow
  Above the swelling stream;

And ragged are the bushes,
And rusty now the rushes,
And wild the clouded gleam.

The thistle now is older,
His stalk begins to moulder,
His head is white as snow;
The branches all are barer,
The linnet's song is rarer,
The robin pipeth now.

Richard Watson Dixon.

XCVI

NOVEMBER

Are thine eyes weary? is thy heart too sick
To struggle any more with doubt and thought,
Whose formless veil draws darkening now and thick
Across thee, e'en as smoke-tinged mist-wreaths brought
Down a fair dale to make it blind and nought?
Art thou so weary that no world there seems
Beyond these four walls, hung with pain and dreams?

Look out upon the real world, where the moon,
Half-way 'twixt root and crown of these high trees,
Turns the dead midnight into dreamy noon,
Silent and full of wonders, for the breeze

Died at the sunset, and no images,
No hopes of day, are left in sky or earth—
Is it not fair, and of most wondrous worth?

Yea, I have looked, and seen November there;
The changeless seal of change it seemed to be,
Fair death of things that, living once, were fair;
Bright sign of loneliness too great for me,
Strange image of the dread eternity,
In whose void patience how can these have part,
These outstretched feverish hands, this restless heart?

William Morris.

XCVII

LOST ON BOTH SIDES

As when two men have loved a woman well,
Each hating each, through Love's and Death's deceit;
Since not for either this stark marriage-sheet
And the long pauses of this wedding-bell;
Yet o'er her grave the night and day dispel
At last their feud forlorn, with cold and heat;
Nor other than dear friends to death may fleet
The two lives left that most of her can tell:—

So separate hopes, which in a soul had wooed
The one same Peace, strove with each other long,
And Peace before their faces perished since:
So through that soul, in restless brotherhood,
They roam together now, and wind among
Its bye-streets, knocking at the dusty inns.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

XCVIII

Heap cassia, sandal-buds and stripes
  Of labdanum, and aloe-balls,
Smeared with dull nard an Indian wipes
  From out her hair: such balsam falls
  Down seaside mountain pedestals,
From tree-tops where tired winds are fain,
Spent with the vast and howling main,
To treasure half their island-gain.

And strew faint sweetness from some old
  Egyptian's fine worm-eaten shroud
Which breaks to dust when once unrolled;
  Or shredded perfume, like a cloud
  From closet long to quiet vowed,
With mothed and dropping arras hung,
Mouldering her lute and books among,
As when a queen, long dead, was young.

Robert Browning.

XCIX

SILENCE

There is a silence where hath been no sound;
There is a silence where no sound may be;
In the cold grave, under the deep, deep sea,
Or in wide desert, where no life is found,
Which hath been mute, and still must sleep profound.
No voice is hushed, no life treads silently;
But cloud, and cloudy shadows wander free,
That never spoke, over the idle ground.

But in green ruins, in the desolate walls
Of antique palaces, where Man hath been,
Though the dun fox, or wild hyaena, calls,
And owls, that flit continually between,
Shriek to the echo, and the low winds moan,
There the true Silence is, self-conscious and alone.

Thomas Hood.

C

Not on sad Stygian shore, nor in clear sheen
Of far Elysian plain, shall we meet those
Among the dead whose pupils we have been,
Nor those great shades whom we have held as foes;
No meadow of asphodel our feet shall tread,
Nor shall we look each other in the face
To love or hate each other being dead,
Hoping some praise, or fearing some disgrace.
We shall not argue, saying "'Twas thus," or "thus,"
Our argument's whole drift we shall forget;
Who's right, who's wrong, 'twill be all one to us;
We shall not even know that we have met.
Yet meet we shall, and part, and meet again,
Where dead men meet, on lips of living men.

Samuel Butler.

CI

Fame is a food that dead men eat,—
I have no stomach for such meat.

In little light and narrow room,
They eat it in the silent tomb,
With no kind voice of comrade near
To bid the feaster be of cheer.

But friendship is a nobler thing,—
Of Friendship it is good to sing.
For truly, when a man shall end,
He lives in memory of his friend,
Who doth his better part recall
And of his fault make funeral.

Austin Dobson.

CII

ON A LUTE FOUND IN A SARCOPHAGUS

What curled and scented sun-girls, almond-eyed,
With lotus blossoms in their hands and hair,
Have made their swarthy lovers call them fair,
With these spent strings, when brutes were defied
And Memnon in the sunrise sprang and cried,
And love-winds smote Bubastis, and the bare
Black breasts of carven Pasht received the prayer
Of suppliants bearing gifts from far and wide!

This lute has outsung Egypt; all the lives
Of violent passion, and the vast calm art
That lasts in granite only, all lie dead;
This little bird of song alone survives,
As fresh as when its fluting smote the heart
Last time the brown slave wore it garlanded.

Edmund Gosse.

CIII

MAGNA EST VERITAS

HERE, in this little Bay,
Full of tumultuous life and great repose,
Where, twice a day,
The purposeless, glad ocean comes and goes,
Under high cliffs, and far from the huge town,
I sit me down.
For want of me the world's course will not fail:
When all its work is done, the lie shall rot;
The truth is great, and shall prevail,
When none cares whether it prevail or not.

Coventry Patmore.

CIV

LUCIFER IN STARLIGHT

ON a starred night Prince Lucifer uprose.
Tired of his dark dominion swung the fiend
Above the rolling ball in cloud part screened,
Where sinners hugged their spectre of repose.
Poor prey to his hot fit of pride were those.
And now upon his western wing he leaned,
Now his huge bulk o'er Afric's sands careened,
Now the black planet shadowed Arctic snows.
Soaring through wider zones that pricked his scars
With memory of the old revolt from Awe,
He reached a middle height, and at the stars,
Which are the brain of heaven, he looked, and sank.
Around the ancient track marched, rank on rank,
The army of unalterable law.

George Meredith.

CV

THERE rolls the deep where grew the tree.
O earth, what changes hast thou seen!
There where the long street roars, hath been
The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow
From form to form, and nothing stands;
They melt like mist, the solid lands,
Like clouds they shape themselves and go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,
And dream my dream, and hold it true;
For tho' my lips may breathe adieu,
I cannot think the thing farewell.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

CVI

THE PILLAR OF THE CLOUD

LEAD, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,
Lead Thou me on!
The night is dark, and I am far from home—
Lead Thou me on!
Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene,—one step enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor pray'd that Thou
Shouldst lead me on.
I loved to choose and see my path, but now
Lead Thou me on!

I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears,
Pride ruled my will: remember not past years.

So long Thy power hath blest me, sure it still
Will lead me on,
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
The night is gone;
And with the morn those angel faces smile
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile.

John Henry, Cardinal Newman.

CVII

"WITH WHOM IS NO VARIABLENESS, NEITHER SHADOW OF TURNING"

It fortifies my soul to know
That, though I perish, Truth is so:
That, howsoe'er I stray and range,
Whate'er I do, Thou dost not change.
I steadier step when I recall
That, if I slip, Thou dost not fall.

Arthur Hugh Clough.

CVIII

A spirit haunts the year's last hours
Dwelling amid these yellowing bowers:
To himself he talks;
For at eventide, listening earnestly,
At his work you may hear him sob and sigh
In the walks;

Earthward he boweth the heavy stalks
Of the mouldering flowers:
Heavily hangs the broad sunflower
Over its grave i' the earth so chilly;
Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

The air is damp, and hush'd, and close,
As a sick man's room when he taketh repose
An hour before death;
My very heart faints and my whole soul grieves
At the moist rich smell of the rotting leaves,
And the breath
Of the fading edges of box beneath,
And the year's last rose.
Heavily hangs the broad sunflower
Over its grave i' the earth so chilly;
Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

CIX

ODE ON ADVANCING AGE

Thou goest more and more
To the silent things; thy hair is hoar,
Emptier thy weary face; like to the shore
Far-ruined, and the desolate billow white,
That recedes and leaves it waif-wrinkled, gap-rocked, weak.

The shore and the billow white
Groan, they cry and rest not; they would speak,
And call the eternal Night
To cease them for ever; bidding new things issue
From her cold tissue:
Night that is ever young, nor knows decay,
Though older by eternity than they.

Go down upon the shore.
The breakers dash, the smitten spray drops to
the roar;
The spit upsprings, and drops again,
Where'er the white waves clash in the main.
Their sound is but one: 'tis the cry
That has risen from of old to the sky,
'Tis their silence!
Go now from the shore
Far-ruined: the grey shingly floor
To thy crashing step answers; the doteril cries,
And on dipping wing flies:
'Tis their silence!
And thou, oh thou
To that wild silence sinkest now.
No more remains to thee than the cry of silence,
the cry
Of the waves, of the shore, of the bird to the sky.
The bald eyes 'neath as bald a brow
Ask but what nature gives
To the inarticulate cries
Of the waves, of the shore, of the bird.
Earth in earth thou art being interred:
No longer in thee lives
The lordly essence which was unlike all,

That was thy flower of soul, the imperial
Glory that separated thee
From all others that might be.

Thy dog hath died before.
Didst thou not mark him? did he not neglect
What roused his rapture once, but still loved thee?
Till, weaker grown, was he not fain reject
Thy pitying hand, thy meat and drink,
For all thou could'st implore?
Then, at the last, how mournfully
Did not his eyelids sink
With wearied sighs?
He sought at last that never-moving night
Which is the same in darkness, as in light,
The closing of the eyes.

So, Age, thou dealest us
To the elements: but no! Resume thy pride,
O man, that musest thus.
Be to the end what thou hast been before:
The ancient joy shall wrap thee still—the tide
Return upon the shore.

Richard Watson Dixon.

CX

PLAY THEN AND SING!

Play then and sing; we too have played,
We likewise, in that subtle shade.
We too have twisted through our hair
Such tendrils as the wild Loves wear,

And heard what mirth the Mænads made,
  Till the wind blew our garlands bare
And left their roses disarrayed,
  And smote the summer with strange air,
And disengirdled and discrowned
The limbs and locks that vine-wreaths bound.

We too have tracked by star-proof trees
The tempest of the Thyiades
  Scare the loud night on hills that hid
  The blood-feasts of the Bassarid,
Heard their song's iron cadences
  Fright the wolf hungering from the kid,
Outroar the lion-throated seas,
  Outchide the north-wind if it chid,
And hush the torrent-tongued ravines
With thunders of their tambourines.

But the fierce flute whose notes acclaim
Dim goddesses of fiery fame,
  Cymbal and clamorous kettledrum,
  Timbrels and tabrets, all are dumb
That turned the high chill air to flame;
  The singing tongues of fire are numb
That called on Cotys by her name
  Edonian, till they felt her come
And maddened, and her mystic face
Lightened along the streams of Thrace.

For Pleasure slumberless and pale,
And Passion with rejected veil,
  Pass, and the tempest-footed throng
  Of hours that follow them with song

Till their feet flag and voices fail,
  And lips that were so loud so long
Learn silence, or a wearier wail;
  So keen is change, and time so strong,
To weave the robes of life and rend
And weave again till life have end.

But weak is change, but strengthless time,
To take the light from heaven, or climb
  The hills of heaven with wasting feet.
  Songs they can stop that earth found meet,
But the stars keep their ageless rhyme;
  Flowers they can slay that spring thought sweet
But the stars keep their spring sublime;
  Passions and pleasures can defeat,
Actions and agonies control,
And life and death, but not the soul.

Because man's soul is man's God still,
What wind soever waft his will
  Across the waves of day and night
  To port or shipwreck, left or right,
By shores and shoals of good and ill;
  And still its flame at mainmast height
Through the rent air that foam-flakes fill
  Sustains the indomitable light
Whence only man hath strength to steer
Or helm to handle without fear.

Save his own soul's light overhead,
None leads him, and none ever led,
  Across birth's hidden harbour-bar,
  Past youth where shoreward shallows are,

Through age that drives on toward the red
  Vast void of sunset hailed from far,
To the equal waters of the dead;
  Save his own soul he hath no star,
And sinks, except his own soul guide,
Helmless in middle turn of tide.

No blast of air or fire of sun
Puts out the light whereby we run
  With girdled loins our lamplit race,
  And each from each takes heart of grace
And spirit till his turn be done,
  And light of face from each man's face
In whom the light of trust is one;
  Since only souls that keep their place
By their own light, and watch things roll,
And stand, have light for any soul.

A little time we gain from time
To set our seasons in some chime,
  For harsh or sweet or loud or low,
  With seasons played out long ago
And souls that in their time and prime
  Took part with summer or with snow,
Lived abject lives out or sublime,
  And had their chance of seed to sow
For service or disservice done
To those days dead and this their son.

A little time that we may fill
Or with such good works or such ill
  As loose the bonds or make them strong
  Wherein all manhood suffers wrong.

By rose-hung river and light-foot rill
  There are who rest not; who think long
Till they discern as from a hill
  At the sun's hour of morning song,
Known of souls only, and those souls free,
The sacred spaces of the sea.

Algernon Charles Swinburne.

CXI

I STROVE with none, for none was worth my strife.
  Nature I loved and, next to Nature, Art:
I warm'd both hands before the fire of life;
  It sinks, and I am ready to depart.

Walter Savage Landor.

CXII

DIRGE IN WOODS

A WIND sways the pines,
  And below
Not a breath of wild air;
Still as the mosses that glow
On the flooring and over the lines
Of the roots here and there

The pine-tree drops its dead;
They are quiet as under the sea.

Overhead, overhead
Rushes life in a race,
As the clouds the clouds chase;
And we go.
And we drop like the fruits of the tree,
Even we,
Even so.

George Meredith.

CXIII

A FAREWELL

Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea,
Thy tribute wave deliver:
No more by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

Flow, softly flow, by lawn and lea,
A rivulet then a river:
No where by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

But here will sigh thine alder tree,
And here thine aspen shiver;
And here by thee will hum the bee,
For ever and for ever.

A thousands suns will stream on thee,
A thousand moons will quiver;
But not by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

CXIV

THE CHOICE

THINK thou and act; to-morrow thou shalt die.
Outstretched in the sun's warmth upon the shore,
Thou say'st: "Man's measured path is all gone o'er:
Up all his years, steeply, with strain and sigh,
Man clomb until he touched the truth; and I,
Even I, and he whom it was destined for."
How should this be? Art thou then so much more
Than they who sowed, that thou shouldst reap thereby?

Nay, come up hither. From this wave-washed mound
Unto the furthest flood-brim look with me;
Then reach on with thy thought till it be drown'd.
Miles and miles distant though the last line be,
And though thy soul sail leagues and leagues beyond,—
Still, leagues beyond those leagues, there is more sea.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

CXV

No coward soul is mine,
No trembler in the world's storm-troubled sphere
I see Heaven's glories shine,
And faith shines equal, arming me from fear.

O God within my breast,
Almighty, ever-present Deity!
Life—that in me has rest,
As I—undying Life—have power in Thee!

Vain are the thousand creeds
That move men's hearts: unutterably vain;
Worthless as withered weeds,
Or idlest froth amid the boundless main,

To waken doubt in one
Holding so fast by Thine infinity;
So surely anchored on
The steadfast rock of immortality.

With wide embracing love
Thy Spirit animates eternal years,
Pervades and broods above,
Changes, sustains, dissolves, creates, and rears.

Though earth and man were gone
And suns and universes ceased to be,
And Thou were left alone,
Every existence would exist in Thee.

There is not room for Death,
Nor atom that his might could render void:
Thou—THOU art Being and Breath,
And what THOU art may never be destroyed.

Emily Brontë.

CXVI

EARLY SPRING

Once more the Heavenly Power
  Makes all things new,
And domes the red-plow'd hills
  With loving blue;
The blackbirds have their wills,
  The throstles too.

Opens a door in Heaven;
  From skies of glass
A Jacob's ladder falls
  On greening grass,
And o'er the mountain-walls
  Young angels pass.

Before them fleets the shower,
  And burst the buds,
And shine the level lands,
  And flash the floods;
The stars are from their hands
  Flung thro' the woods,

The woods with living airs
  How softly fann'd,
Light airs from where the deep,
  All down the sand,
Is breathing in his sleep,
  Heard by the land.

O follow, leaping blood,
The season's lure!
O heart, look down and up
Serene, secure,
Warm as the crocus cup,
Like snowdrops, pure!

Past, Future glimpse and fade
Thro' some slight spell,
A gleam from yonder vale,
Some far blue fell,
And sympathies, how frail,
In sound and smell!

Till at thy chuckled note,
Thou twinkling bird,
The fairy fancies range,
And, lightly stirr'd,
Ring little bells of change
From word to word.

For now the Heavenly Power
Makes all things new,
And thaws the cold, and fills
The flower with dew;
The blackbirds have their wills,
The poets too.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

BOOK II

CXVII

SINCE to be loved endures,
To love is wise:
Earth hath no good but yours,
Brave, joyful eyes:

Earth hath no sin but thine,
Dull eye of scorn:
O'er thee the sun doth pine
And angels mourn.

Robert Bridges.

CXVIII

THE LOVER TELLS OF THE ROSE IN HIS HEART

ALL things uncomely and broken, all things worn out and old,
The cry of a child by the roadway, the creak of a lumbering cart,
The heavy steps of the ploughman, splashing the wintry mould,
Are wronging your image that blossoms a rose in the deeps of my heart.

The wrong of unshapely things is a wrong too
great to be told;
I hunger to build them anew and sit on a green
knoll apart,
With the earth and the sky and the water, remade,
like a casket of gold
For my dreams of your image that blossoms a rose
in the deeps of my heart.

William Butler Yeats.

CXIX

DAISY

Where the thistle lifts a purple crown
Six foot out of the turf,
And the harebell shakes on the windy hill—
O the breath of the distant surf!—

The hills look over on the South,
And southward dreams the sea;
And, with the sea-breeze hand in hand,
Came innocence and she.

Where 'mid the gorse the raspberry
Red for the gatherer springs,
Two children did we stray and talk
Wise, idle, childish things.

She listened with big-lipped surprise,
Breast-deep 'mid flower and spine:
Her skin was like a grape, whose veins
Run snow instead of wine.

She knew not those sweet words she spake,
  Nor knew her own sweet way;
But there's never a bird, so sweet a song
  Thronged in whose throat that day!

Oh, there were flowers in Storrington
  On the turf and on the spray;
But the sweetest flower on Sussex hills
  Was the Daisy-flower that day!

Her beauty smoothed earth's furrowed face!
  She gave me tokens three:—
A look, a word of her winsome mouth,
  And a wild raspberry.

A berry red, a guileless look,
  A still word,—strings of sand!
And yet they made my wild, wild heart
  Fly down to her little hand.

For, standing artless as the air,
  And candid as the skies,
She took the berries with her hand,
  And the love with her sweet eyes.

The fairest things have fleetest end:
  Their scent survives their close,
But the rose's scent is bitterness
  To him that loved the rose!

She looked a little wistfully,
  Then went her sunshine way:—
The sea's eye had a mist on it,
  And the leaves fell from the day.

She went her unremembering way,
  She went, and left in me
The pang of all the partings gone,
  And the partings yet to be.

She left me marvelling why my soul
  Was sad that she was glad;
At all the sadness in the sweet,
  The sweetness in the sad.

Still, still I seemed to see her, still
  Look up with soft replies,
And take the berries with her hand,
  And the love with her lovely eyes.

Nothing begins, and nothing ends,
  That is not paid with moan;
For we are born in other's pain,
  And perish in our own.

Francis Thompson.

CXX

THE MIRACLE

Who beckons the green ivy up
  Its solitary tower of stone?
What spirit lures the bindweed's cup
    Unfaltering on?
Calls even the starry lichen to climb
By agelong inches endless Time?

Who bids the hollyhock uplift
  Her rod of fast-sealed buds on high;
Fling wide her petals—silent, swift,
    Lovely to the sky?
Since as she kindled, so she will fade,
Flower above flower in squalor laid.

Ever the heavy billow rears
  All its sea-length in green, hushed wall;
But totters as the shore it nears,
    Foams to its fall;
Where was its mark? on what vain quest
Rose that great water from its rest?

So creeps ambition on; so climb
  Man's vaunting thoughts. He, set on high,
Forgets his birth, small place, brief time,
    That he shall die;
Dreams blindly in his stagnant air;
Consumes his strength; strips himself bare;

Rejects delight, ease, pleasure, hope,
  Seeking in vain, but seeking yet,
Past earthly promise, earthly scope,
    On one aim set:
As if, like Chaucer's child, he thought
All but "O Alma!" nought.

Walter da la Mare.

CXXI

TO THE BODY

Thou inmost, ultimate
Council of judgment, palace of decrees,
Where the high senses hold their spiritual state,
Sued by earth's embassies,
And sign, approve, accept, conceive, create;

Create—thy senses close
With the world's pleas. The random odours reach
Their sweetness in the place of thy repose,
Upon thy tongue the peach,
And in thy nostrils breathes the breathing rose.

To thee, secluded one,
The dark vibrations of the sightless skies
The lovely inexplicit colours run;
The light gropes for those eyes.
O thou august! thou dost command the sun.

Music, all dumb, hath trod
Into thine ear her one effectual way;
And fire and cold approach to gain thy nod,
Where thou call'st up the day,
Where thou awaitest the appeal of God.

Alice Meynell.

CXXII

THE BODY

ONLY the nest of spices
That spends upon the air
Sweet smoke of sacrifices
When, terrible and fair,
The phœnix Soul arises
The heavenlier gold to dare!—
Alas! the nest of spices
Fading through earthly air.

Rachel Annand Taylor.

CXXIII

TO POETS

WE are the homeless, even as you,
Who hope and never can begin.
Our hearts are wounded through and through
Like yours, but our hearts bleed within.
We too make music, but our tones
'Scape not the barrier of our bones.

We have no comeliness like you.
We toil, unlovely, and we spin.
We start, return: we wind, undo:
We hope, we err, we strive, we sin,
We love: your love's not greater, but
The lips of our love's might stay shut.

We have the evil spirits too
That shake our soul with battle-din.
But we have an eviller spirit than you,
We have a dumb spirit within:
The exceeding bitter agony
But not the exceeding bitter cry.

Charles Hamilton Sorley.

CXXIV

THUNDERSTORMS

My mind has thunderstorms,
That brood for heavy hours:
Until they rain me words,
My thoughts are drooping flowers
And sulking, silent birds.

Yet come, dark thunderstorms,
And brood your heavy hours;
For when you rain me words,
My thoughts are dancing flowers
And joyful singing birds.

William Henry Davies.

CXXV

EBBTIDE AT SUNDOWN

How larger is remembrance than desire!
How deeper than all longing is regret!
The tide is gone, the sands are rippled yet;
The sun is gone; the hills are lifted higher,

Crested with rose. Ah, why should we require
Sight of the sea, the sun? The sands are wet,
And in their glassy flaws huge record set
Of the ebbed stream, the little ball of fire.
Gone, they are gone! But, oh, so freshly gone,
So rich in vanishing we ask not where—
So close upon us is the bliss that shone,
And, oh, so thickly it impregns the air!
Closer in beating heart we could not be
To the sunk sun, the far, surrendered sea.

Michael Field.

CXXVI

SILENCE SINGS

So faint, no ear is sure it hears,
So faint and far;
So vast that very near appears
My voice, both here and in each star
Unmeasured leagues do bridge between;
Like that which on a face is seen
Where secrets are;

Sweeping, like veils of lofty balm,
Tresses unbound
O'er desert sand, o'er ocean calm,
I am wherever is not sound;
And, goddess of the truthful face,
My beauty doth instil its grace
That joy abound.

T. Sturge Moore.

CXXVII

NIGHTINGALES

Beautiful must be the mountains whence ye come,
And bright in the fruitful valleys the streams wherefrom
Ye learn your song:
Where are those starry woods? O might I wander there,
Among the flowers, which in that heavenly air
Bloom the year long!

Nay, barren are those mountains and spent the streams:
Our song is the voice of desire, that haunts our dreams,
A throe of the heart,
Whose pining visions dim, forbidden hopes profound,
No dying cadence nor long sigh can sound,
For all our art.

Alone, aloud in the raptured ear of men
We pour our dark nocturnal secret; and then,
As night is withdrawn
From these sweet-springing meads and bursting boughs of May,
Dream, while the innumerable choir of day
Welcome the dawn.

Robert Bridges.

CXXVIII

CITIES AND THRONES AND POWERS

Cities and Thrones and Powers,
Stand in Time's eye,
Almost as long as flowers,
Which daily die.
But, as new buds put forth
To glad new men,
Out of the spent and unconsidered Earth
The Cities rise again.

This season's Daffodil,
She never hears
What change, what chance, what chill,
Cut down last year's:
But with bold countenance,
And knowledge small,
Esteems her seven days' continuance
To be perpetual.

So Time that is o'er-kind,
To all that be,
Ordains us e'en as blind,
As bold as she:
That in our very death,
And burial sure,
Shadow to shadow, well persuaded, saith,
"See how our works endure!"

Rudyard Kipling.

CXXIX

CORRELATED GREATNESS

O NOTHING, in this corporal earth of man,
That to the imminent heaven of his high soul
Responds with colour and with shadow, can
Lack correlated greatness. If the scroll
Where thoughts lie fast in spell of hieroglyph
Be mighty through its mighty habitants;
If God be in His Name; grave potence if
The sounds unbind of hieratic chants;
All's vast that vastness means. Nay, I affirm
Nature is whole in her least things exprest,
Nor know we with what scope God builds the worm.
Our towns are copied fragments from our breast;
And all man's Babylons strive but to impart
The grandeurs of his Babylonian heart.

Francis Thompson.

CXXX

ALL THAT'S PAST

VERY old are the woods;
And the buds that break
Out of the brier's boughs,
When March winds wake
So old with their beauty are—
Oh, no man knows
Through what wild centuries
Roves back the rose.

Very old are the brooks;
And the rills that rise
Where snow sleeps cold beneath
The azure skies
Sing such a history
Of come and gone,
Their every drop is as wise
As Solomon.

Very old are we men;
Our dreams are tales
Told in dim Eden
By Eve's nightingales;
We wake and whisper awhile,
But, the day gone by,
Silence and sleep like fields
Of amaranth lie.

Walter de la Mare.

CXXXI

A SONG OF DERIVATIONS

I COME from nothing; but from where
Come the undying thoughts I bear?
Down, through long links of death and birth,
From the past poets of the earth.
My immortality is there.

I am like the blossom of an hour.
But long, long vanished sun and shower
Awoke my breath i' the young world's air.
I track the past back everywhere
Through seed and flower and seed and flower.

Or I am like a stream that flows
Full of the cold springs that arose
  In morning lands, in distant hills;
  And down the plain my channel fills
With melting of forgotten snows.

Voices, I have not heard, possessed
My own fresh songs; my thoughts are blessed
  With relics of the far unknown.
  And mixed with memories not my own
The sweet streams throng into my breast.

Before this life began to be,
The happy songs that wake in me
  Woke long ago and far apart.
  Heavily on this little heart
Presses this immortality.

Alice Meynell.

CXXXII

ODE IN MAY

Let me go forth, and share
The overflowing Sun
With one wise friend, or one
Better than wise, being fair,
Where the pewit wheels and dips
On heights of bracken and ling,
And Earth, unto her leaflet tips,
Tingles with the Spring.

What is so sweet and dear
As a prosperous morn in May,

The confident prime of the day,
And the dauntless youth of the year,
When nothing that asks for bliss,
Asking aright, is denied,
And half of the world a bridegroom is,
And half of the world a bride?

The Song of Mingling flows,
Grave, ceremonial, pure,
As once, from lips that endure,
The cosmic descant rose,
When the temporal lord of life,
Going his golden way,
Had taken a wondrous maid to wife
That long had said him nay.

For of old the Sun, our sire,
Came wooing the mother of men,
Earth, that was virginal then,
Vestal fire to his fire.
Silent her bosom and coy,
But the strong god sued and pressed;
And born of their starry nuptial joy
Are all that drink of her breast.

And the triumph of him that begot,
And the travail of her that bore,
Behold, they are evermore
As warp and weft in our lot.
We are children of splendour and flame
Of shuddering, also, and tears.
Magnificent out of the dust we came
And abject from the Spheres.

O bright irresistible lord,
We are fruit of Earth's womb, each one,
And fruit of thy love, O Sun,
For this thy spouse, thy adored.
To thee as our Father we bow,
Forbidden thy Father to see,
Who is older and greater than thou, as thou
Art greater and older than we.

Thou art but as a word of his speech,
Thou art but as a wave of his hand;
Thou art brief as a glitter of sand
'Twixt tide and tide on his beach;
Thou art less than a spark of his fire,
Or a moment's mood of his soul:
Thou art lost in the notes on the lips of his choir
That chant the chant of the Whole.

Sir William Watson.

CXXXIII

ON A MIDSUMMER EVE

I IDLY cut a parsley stalk,
And blew therein towards the moon;
I had not thought what ghosts would walk
With shivering footsteps to my tune.

I went, and knelt, and scooped my hand
As if to drink, into the brook,
And a faint figure seemed to stand
Above me, with the bygone look.

I lipped rough rhymes of chance, not choice,
I thought not what my words might be;
There came into my ear a voice
That turned a tenderer verse for me.

Thomas Hardy.

CXXXIV

A SONG OF ENCHANTMENT

A SONG of Enchantment I sang me there,
In a green-green wood, by waters fair,
Just as the words came up to me
I sang it under the wild wood tree.

Widdershins turned I, singing it low,
Watching the wild birds come and go;
No cloud in the deep dark blue to be seen
Under the thick-thatched branches green.

Twilight came: silence came:
The planet of Evening's silver flame;
By darkening paths I wandered through
Thickets trembling with drops of dew.

But the music is lost and the words are gone
Of the song I sang as I sat alone,
Ages and ages have fallen on me—
On the wood and the pool and the elder tree.

Walter de la Mare.

CXXXV

KINDNESS

Of the beauty of kindness I speak,
Of a smile, of a charm
On the face it is pleasure to meet,
That gives no alarm!

Of the soul that absorbeth itself
In discovering good,
Of that power which outlasts health,
As the spell of a wood

Outlasts the sad fall of the leaves,
And in winter is fine,
And from snow and from frost receives
A garment divine.

Oh! well may the lark sing of this,
As through rents of huge cloud,
It breaks on blue gulfs that are bliss,
For they make its heart proud

With the power of wings deployed
In delightfullest air.
Yea, thus among things enjoyed
Is kindness rare.

For even the weak with surprise
Spread wings, utter song,
They can launch—in this blue they can rise,
In this kindness are strong,—

They can launch like a ship into calm,
Which was penn'd up by storm,
Which sails for the islands of balm
Luxuriant and warm.

T. Sturge Moore.

CXXXVI

THE FIDDLER OF DOONEY

When I play on my fiddle in Dooney,
Folk dance like a wave of the sea;
My cousin is priest in Kilvarnet,
My brother in Mocharabuiee.

I passed my brother and cousin:
They read in their books of prayer;
I read in my book of songs
I bought at the Sligo fair.

When we come at the end of time,
To Peter sitting in state,
He will smile on the three old spirits,
But call me first through the gate;

For the good are always the merry,
Save by an evil chance,
And the merry love the fiddle
And the merry love to dance:

And when the folk there spy me,
They will all come up to me,
With "Here is the fiddler of Dooney!"
And dance like a wave of the sea.

William Butler Yeats.

CXXXVII

THE DARKLING THRUSH

I LEANT upon a coppice gate
When Frost was spectre-gray,
And Winter's dregs made desolate
The weakening eye of day.
The tangled bine-stems scored the sky
Like strings of broken lyres,
And all mankind that haunted nigh
Had sought their household fires.

The land's sharp features seemed to be
The Century's corpse outleant,
His crypt the cloudy canopy,
The wind his death-lament.
The ancient pulse of germ and birth
Was shrunken hard and dry,
And every spirit upon earth
Seemed fervourless as I.

At once a voice arose among
The bleak twigs overhead
In a full-hearted evensong
Of joy illimited;
An aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small,
In blast-beruffled plume,
Had chosen thus to fling his soul
Upon the growing gloom.

So little cause for carollings
Of such ecstatic sound
Was written on terrestrial things
Afar or nigh around,
That I could think there trembled through
His happy good-night air
Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew
And I was unaware.

Thomas Hardy.

CXXXVIII

THE LINNET

Upon this leafy bush
With thorns and roses in it,
Flutters a thing of light,
A twittering linnet,
And all the throbbing world
Of dew and sun and air
By this small parcel of life
Is made more fair;
As if each bramble-spray
And mounded gold-wreathed furze,
Harebell and little thyme,
Were only hers;
As if this beauty and grace
Did to one bird belong,
And, at a flutter of wing,
Might vanish in song.

Walter de la Mare.

CXXXIX

I WOULD be a bird, and straight on wings I arise,
And carry purpose up to the ends of the air:
In calm and storm my sails I feather, and where
By freezing cliffs the unransom'd wreckage lies:
Or, strutting on hot meridian banks, surprise
The silence: over plains in the moonlight bare
I chase my shadow, and perch where no bird dare
In treetops torn by fiercest winds of the skies.

Poor simple birds, foolish birds! then I cry,
Ye pretty pictures of delight, unstir'd
By the only joy of knowing that ye fly;
Ye are not what ye are, but rather, sum'd in a word,
The alphabet of a god's idea, and I
Who master it, I am the only bird.

Robert Bridges.

CXL

THE EXAMPLE

HERE'S an example from
A Butterfly;
That on a rough, hard rock
Happy can lie;
Friendless and all alone
On this unsweetened stone.

Now let my bed be hard,
No care take I;
I'll make my joy like this
Small Butterfly;
Whose happy heart has power
To make a stone a flower.

William Henry Davies.

CXLI

THE HOUSE BEAUTIFUL

A naked house, a naked moor,
A shivering pool before the door,
A garden bare of flowers and fruit
And poplars at the gardeln foot:
Such is the place that I live in,
Bleak without and bare within.

Yet shall your ragged moor receive
The incomparable pomp of eve,
And the cold glories of the dawn
Behind your shivering trees be drawn;
And when the wind from place to place
Doth the unmoored cloud-galleons chase,
Your garden gloom and gleam again,
With leaping sun, with glancing rain.
Here shall the wizard moon ascend
The heavens, in the crimson end
Of day's declining splendour; here
The army of the stars appear.

The neighbour hollows, dry or wet,
Spring shall with tender flowers beset;
And oft the morning muser see
Larks rising from the broomy lea,
And every fairy wheel and thread
Of cobweb dew-bediamonded.
When daisies go, shall winter time
Silver the simple grass with rime;
Autumnal frosts enchant the pool
And make the cart-ruts beautiful;
And when snow-bright the moor expands,
How shall your children clap their hands!
To make this earth, our hermitage,
A cheerful and a changeful page,
God's bright and intricate device
Of days and seasons doth suffice.

Robert Louis Stevenson.

CXLII

PIED BEAUTY

Glory be to God for dappled things—
For skies of couple-colour as a brindled cow;
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;
Landscape plotted and pieced—fold, fallow, and plough;
And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.

All things counter, original, spare, strange;
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle dim;
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:
Praise Him.

Gerard Hopkins.

CXLIII

THERE ARE STILL KINGFISHERS

FAITH peace and joy to-day brings: all has failed
I this day put my hand to, well know I;
Less blind than some so far, though that's not why;
But with joy peace and faith my spirit is mailed,
Since on Wren's bridge at noon, unseen, unhailed,
I, all alone, saw the kingfisher fly.

Not as before, startled by friendly prod,
In stagnant ditch to imagine something quiver,
Lost while half-seen; but brilliant, clear, and broad,
Forty-two yards up the middle of the river
Under my eyes shot the turquoise unflawed!
Nothing of me that bird knows and will never;
But I rejoiced, as men rejoice in God,
Not that He cares for them, but lives for ever.

A. Y. Campbell.

CXLIV

INVERSNAID

This darksome burn, horseback brown,
His rollrock highroad roaring down,
In coop and in comb the fleece of his foam
Flutes and low to the lake falls home.

A windpuff-bonnet of fawn-froth
Turns and twinkles over the broth
Of a pool so pitchblack, fell-frowning,
It rounds and rounds Despair to drowning.

Degged with dew, dappled with dew
Are the groins of the braes that the brook treads through,
Wiry heathpacks, flitches of fern,
And the beadbonny ash that sits over the burn.

What would the world be, once bereft
Of wet and of wildness? Let them be left,
O let them be left, wildness and wet;
Long live the weeds and the wilderness yet.

Gerard Hopkins.

CXLV

THE GIPSY GIRL

"Come, try your skill, kind gentlemen,
A penny for three tries!"
Some threw and lost, some threw and won
A ten-a-penny prize.

She was a tawny gipsy girl,
A girl of twenty years,
I liked her for the lumps of gold
That jingled from her ears;

I liked the flaring yellow scarf
Bound loose about her throat,
I liked her showy purple gown
And flashy velvet coat.

A man came up, too loose of tongue,
And said no good to her;
She did not blush as Saxons do,
Or turn upon the cur;

She fawned and whined "Sweet gentleman,
A penny for three tries!"
But oh, the den of wild things in
The darkness of her eyes!

Ralph Hodgson.

CXLVI

A MOTHER TO A BABY

WHERE were you, Baby?
Where were you, dear?
Even I have known you
Only a year.

You were born, Baby,
When I was born.
Twelve months ago you
Left me forlorn.

Why did you leave me,
  Heart of my heart?
Then I was all of you,
  Now but a part.

You lived while I lived,
  We two were one.
We two are two now
  While the days run.

When you can say, love,
  Baby, like me,
Think, as I think, love,
  You on my knee:

Every maid born, love,
  Womanly, mild,
Is in herself, love,
  Mother and child.

Mary Coleridge.

CXLVII

THE MODERN MOTHER

Oh, what a kiss
With filial passion overcharged is this!
  To this misgiving breast
This child runs, as a child ne'er ran to rest
Upon the light heart and the unoppressed.

Unhoped, unsought!
A little tenderness, this mother thought
The utmost of her meed.
She looked for gratitude; content indeed
With thus much that her nine years' love had bought.

Nay, even with less.
This mother, giver of life, death, peace, distress,
Desired ah! not so much
Thanks as forgiveness; and the passing touch
Expected, and the slight, the brief caress.

O filial light
Strong in these childish eyes, these new, these bright
Intelligible stars! their rays
Are near the constant earth, guides in the maze,
Natural, true, keen in this dusk of days.

Alice Meynell.

CXLVIII

When I see childhood on the threshold seize
The prize of life from age and likelihood,
I mourn time's change that will not be withstood,
Thinking how Christ said *Be like one of these.*
For in the forest among many trees
Scarce one in all is found that hath made good
The virgin pattern of its slender wood,
That courtesied in joy to every breeze;

But scath'd, but knotted trunks that raise on high
Their arms in stiff contortion, strain'd and bare;
Whose patriarchal crowns in sorrow sigh.
So, little children, ye—nay, nay, ye ne'er
From me shall learn how sure the change and nigh,
When ye shall share our strength and mourn to share.

Robert Bridges.

CXLIX

THE ELM

This is the place where Dorothea smiled.
I did not know the reason, nor did she.
But there she stood, and turned, and smiled at me:
A sudden glory had bewitched the child.
The corn at harvest, and a single tree.
This is the place where Dorothea smiled.

Hilaire Belloc.

CL

TO CHRISTINA AT NIGHTFALL

Little thing, ah, little mouse,
Creeping through the twilit house,
To watch within the shadow of my chair
With large blue eyes; the firelight on your hair
Doth glimmer gold and faint,

And on your woolen gown
That folds a-down
From steadfast little face to square-set feet.

Ah, sweet! ah, little one! so like a carven saint,
With your unflinching eyes, unflinching face,
Like a small angel, carved in a high place,
Watching unmoved across a gabled town;
When I am weak and old,
And lose my grip, and claim my small reward
Of tolerance and tenderness and ruth,
The children of your dawning day shall hold
The reins we drop and wield the judge's sword,
And your swift feet shall tread upon my heels,
And I be Ancient Error, you New Truth,
And I be crushed by your advancing wheels . . .
Good-night! The fire is burning low,
Put out the lamp;
Lay down the weary little head
Upon the small white bed.

Up from the sea the night winds blow
Across the hill, across the marsh;
Chill and harsh, harsh and damp,
The night winds blow.
But, while the slow hours go,
I, who must fall before you, late shall wait and keep
Watch and ward,
Vigil and guard,
Where you sleep.
Ah, sweet! do you the like where I lie dead.

Ford Madox Ford.

CLI

THE STOLEN CHILD

WHERE dips the rocky highland
Of Sleuth wood in the lake,
There lies a leafy island
Where flapping herons wake
The drowsy water rats;
There we've hid our faery vats,
Full of berries,
And of reddest stolen cherries.
Come away, O human child!
To the waters and the wild
With a faery, hand in hand,
For the world's more full of weeping than you can understand.

Where the wave of moonlight glosses
The dim gray sands with light,
Far off by furthest Rosses
We foot it all the night,
Weaving olden dances,
Mingling hands and mingling glances
Till the moon has taken flight;
To and fro we leap
And chase the frothy bubbles,
While the world is full of troubles
And is anxious in its sleep.
Come away, O human child!
To the waters and the wild
With a faery, hand in hand,
For the world's more full of weeping than you can understand.

Where the wandering water gushes
From the hills above Glen-Car,
In pools among the rushes
That scarce could bathe a star,
We seek for slumbering trout,
And whispering in their ears
Give them unquiet dreams;
Leaning softly out
From ferns that drop their tears
Over the young streams.
Come away, O human child!
To the waters and the wild
With a faery, hand in hand,
For the world's more full of weeping than you can understand.

Away with us he's going,
The solemn-eyed;
He'll hear no more the lowing
Of the calves on the warm hillside;
Or the kettle on the hob
Sing peace into his breast,
Or see the brown mice bob
Round and round the oatmeal-chest.
For he comes, the human child,
To the waters and the wild
With a faery, hand in hand,
From a world more full of weeping than he can understand.

William Butler Yeats.

CLII

FROLIC

THE children were shouting together
And racing along the sands,
A glimmer of dancing shadows,
A dovelike flutter of hands.

The stars were shouting in heaven,
The sun was chasing the moon:
The game was the same as the children's,
They danced to the self-same tune.

The whole of the world was merry,
One joy from the vale to the height,
Where the blue woods of twilight encircled
The lovely lawns of the light.

George Russell (*A. E.*).

CLIII

THE LISTENERS

"Is there anybody there?" said the Traveller,
  Knocking on the moonlit door;
And his horse in the silence champed the grasses
  Of the forest's ferny floor:
And a bird flew up out of the turret,
  Above the Traveller's head:
And he smote upon the door again a second time;
  "Is there anybody there?" he said.

But no one descended to the Traveller;
No head from the leaf-fringed sill
Leaned over and looked into his grey eyes,
Where he stood perplexed and still.
But only a host of phantom listeners
That dwelt in the lone house then
Stood listening in the quiet of the moonlight
To that voice from the world of men:
Stood thronging the faint moonbeams on the dark stair,
That goes down to the empty hall,
Hearkening in an air stirred and shaken
By the lonely Traveller's call.
And he felt in his heart their strangeness,
Their stillness answering his cry,
While his horse moved, cropping the dark turf,
'Neath the starred and leafy sky;
For he suddenly smote on the door, even
Louder, and lifted his head:—
"Tell them I came, and no one answered,
That I kept my word," he said.
Never the least stir made the listeners,
Though every word he spake
Fell echoing through the shadowiness of the still house
From the one man left awake:
Ay, they heard his foot upon the stirrup,
And the sound of iron on stone,
And how the silence surged softly backward,
When the plunging hoofs were gone.

Walter de la Mare.

CLIV

LONDON SNOW

When men were all asleep the snow came flying,
In large white flakes falling on the city brown,
Stealthily and perpetually settling and loosely lying,
Hushing the latest traffic of the drowsy town;
Deadening, muffling, stifling its murmurs failing;
Lazily and incessantly floating down and down:
Silently sifting and veiling road, roof and railing;
Hiding difference, making unevenness even,
Into angles and crevices softly drifting and sailing.
All night it fell, and when full inches seven
It lay in the depth of its uncompacted lightness,
The clouds blew off from a high and frosty heaven;
And all woke earlier for the unaccustomed brightness
Of the winter dawning, the strange unheavenly glare:
The eye marvelled—marvelled at the dazzling whiteness;
The ear hearkened to the stillness of the solemn air;
No sound of wheel rumbling nor of foot falling,
And the busy morning cries came thin and spare.
Then boys I heard, as they went to school, calling,
They gathered up the crystal manna to freeze

Their tongues with tasting, their hands with
snow-balling;
Or rioted in a drift, plunging up to the knees;
Or peering up from under the white-mossed
wonder,
"O look at the trees!" they cried, "O look at
the trees!"
With lessened load a few carts creak and blunder,
Following along the white deserted way,
A country company long dispersed asunder:
When now already the sun, in pale display
Standing by Paul's high dome, spread forth below
His sparkling beams, and awoke the stir of the day.
For now doors open, and war is waged with
the snow;
And trains of sombre men, past tale of number,
Tread long brown paths, as toward their toil
they go:
But even for them awhile no cares encumber
Their minds diverted; the daily word is unspoken,
The daily thoughts of labour and sorrow slumber
At the sight of the beauty that greets them, for
the charm they have broken.

Robert Bridges.

CLV

THE FISH

In a cool curving world he lies
And ripples with dark ecstasies.

The kind luxurious lapse and steal
Shapes all his universe to feel
And know and be; the clinging stream
Closes his memory, glooms his dream,
Who lips the roots o' the shore, and glides
Superb on unreturning tides.
Those silent waters weave for him
A fluctuant mutable world and dim,
Where wavering masses bulge and gape
Mysterious, and shape to shape
Dies momently through whorl and hollow,
And form and line and solid follow
Solid and line and form to dream
Fantastic down the eternal stream;
An obscure world, a shifting world,
Bulbous, or pulled to thin, or curled,
Or serpentine, or driving arrows,
Or serene slidings, or March narrows.
There slipping wave and shore are one,
And weed and mud. No ray of sun,
But glow to glow fades down the deep
(As dream to unknown dream in sleep);
Shaken translucency illumes
The hyaline of drifting glooms;
The strange soft-handed depth subdues
Drowned colour there, but black to hues,
As death to living, decomposes—
Red darkness of the heart of roses,
Blue brilliant from dead starless skies,
And gold that lies behind the eyes,
The unknown unnameable sightless white
That is the essential flame of night,
Lustreless purple, hooded green,

The myriad hues that lie between
Darkness and darkness! . . .

And all's one,
Gentle, embracing, quiet, dun,
The world he rests in, world he knows,
Perpetual curving. Only—grows
An eddy in that ordered falling,
A knowledge from the gloom, a calling
Weed in the wave, gleam in the mud—
The dark fire leaps along his blood;
Dateless and breathless, blind and still,
The intricate impulse works its will;
His woven world drops back; and he,
Sans providence, sans memory,
Unconscious and directly driven,
Fades to some dank sufficient heaven.

O world of lips, O world of laughter,
Where hope is fleet and thought flies after,
Of lights in the clear night, of cries
That drift along the wave and rise
Thin to the glittering stars above,
You know the hands, the eyes of love!
The strife of limbs, the sightless clinging,
The infinite distance, and the singing
Blown by the wind, a flame of sound,
The gleam, the flowers, and vast around
The horizon, and the heights above—
You know the sigh, the song of love!

But there the night is close, and there
Darkness is cold and strange and bare;

And the secret deeps are whisperless;
And rhythm is all deliciousness;
And joy is in the throbbing tide,
Whose intricate fingers beat and glide
In felt bewildering harmonies
Of trembling touch; and music is
The exquisite knocking of the blood.
Space is no more, under the mud;
His bliss is older than the sun.
Silent and straight the waters run.
The lights, the cries, the willows dim,
And the dark tide are one with him.

Rupert Brooke.

CLVI

THE OLD SHIPS

I HAVE seen old ships sail like swans asleep
Beyond the village which men still call Tyre,
With leaden age o'ercargoed, dipping deep
For Famagusta and the hidden sun
That rings black Cyprus with a lake of fire;
And all those ships were certainly so old
Who knows how oft with squat and noisy gun,
Questing brown slaves or Syrian oranges,
The pirate Genoese
Hell-raked them till they rolled
Blood, water, fruit, and corpses up the hold.
But now through friendly seas they softly run,
Painted the mid-sea blue or shore-sea green,
Still patterned with the vine and grapes in gold.

But I have seen,
Pointing her shapely shadows from the dawn
And image tumbled on a rose-swept bay,
A drowsy ship of some yet older day;
And, wonder's breath indrawn,
Thought I—who knows—who knows—but that same
(Fished up beyond Ææa, patched up new
—Stern painted brighter blue—)
That talkative, bald-headed seaman came
(Twelve patient comrades sweating at the oar)
From Troy's doom-crimson shore,
And with great lies about his wooden horse
Set the crew laughing, and forgot his course.

It was so old a ship—who knows—who knows?
—And yet so beautiful, I watched in vain
To see the mast burst open with a rose,
And the whole deck put on its leaves again.

James Elroy Flecker.

CLVII

FLANNAN ISLE

"Though three men dwell on Flannan Isle
To keep the lamp alight,
As we steer'd under the lee, we caught
No glimmer through the night!"

A passing ship at dawn had brought
The news; and quickly we set sail,
To find out what strange thing might ail
The keepers of the deep-sea light.

The winter day broke blue and bright,
With glancing sun and glancing spray,
As o'er the swell our boat made way,
As gallant as a gull in flight.

But, as we near'd the lonely isle;
And look'd up at the naked height;
And saw the lighthouse towering while
With blinded lantern, that all night
Had never shot a spark
Of comfort through the dark.
So ghostly in the cold sunlight
It seem'd, that we were struck the while
With wonder all too dread for words.

And, as into the tiny creek
We stole beneath the hanging crag,
We saw three queer, black, ugly birds—
Too big, by far, in my belief,
For guillemot or shag—
Like seamen sitting bolt-upright
Upon a half-tide reef:
But, as we near'd, they plunged from sight
Without a sound, or spurt of white.

And still too mazed to speak,
We landed; and made fast the boat;

And climb'd the track in single file,
Each wishing he was safe afloat,
On any sea, however far,
So it be far from Flannan Isle:
And still we seem'd to climb, and climb,
As though we'd lost all count of time,
And so must climb for evermore.
Yet, all too soon, we reached the door—
The black, sun-blister'd lighthouse-door,
That gaped for us ajar.

As, on the threshold, for a spell,
We paused, we seem'd to breathe the smell
Of limewash and of tar,
Familiar as our daily breath,
As though 'twere some strange scent of death:
And so, yet wondering, side by side,
We stood a moment, still tongue-tied:
And each with black foreboding eyed
The door, ere we should fling it wide,
To leave the sunlight for the gloom:
Till, plucking courage up, at last,
Hard on each other's heels we pass'd
Into the living-room.

Yet, as we crowded through the door,
We only saw a table, spread
For dinner, meat and cheese and bread;
But all untouch'd; and no one there:
As though, when they sat down to eat,
Ere they could even taste,
Alarm had come; and they in haste
Had risen and left the bread and meat:

For at the table-head a chair
Lay tumbled on the floor.

We listen'd; but we only heard
The feeble cheeping of a bird
That starved upon its perch:
And, listening still, without a word,
We set about our hopeless search.

We hunted high, we hunted low,
And soon ransack'd the empty house;
Then o'er the Island, to and fro,
We ranged, to listen and to look
In every cranny, cleft or nook
That might have hid a bird or mouse:
But, though we search'd from shore to shore,
We found no sign in any place:
And soon again stood face to face
Before the gaping door:
And stole into the room once more
As frighten'd children steal.

Aye: though we hunted high and low,
And hunted everywhere,
Of the three men's fate we found no trace
Of any kind in any place,
But a door ajar, and an untouch'd meal,
And an overtoppled chair.

And, as we listen'd in the gloom
Of that forsaken living-room—
A chill clutch on our breath—
We thought how ill-chance came to all

Who kept the Flannan Light:
And how the rock had been the death
Of many a likely lad:
How six had come to a sudden end,
And three had gone stark mad:
And one whom we'd all known as friend
Had leapt from the lantern one still night,
And fallen dead by the lighthouse wall:
And long we thought
On the three we sought,
And of what might yet befall.

Like curs a glance has brought to heel,
We listen'd, flinching there:
And look'd, and look'd, on the untouch'd meal
And the overtoppled chair.

We seem'd to stand for an endless while,
Though still no word was said,
Three men alive on Flannan Isle,
Who thought on three men dead.

Wilfrid Wilson Gibson.

CLVIII

A PASSER-BY

WHITHER, O splendid ship, thy white sails crowding,
Leaning across the bosom of the urgent West
That fearest nor sea rising, nor sky clouding,
Whither away, fair rover, and what thy quest?

Ah! soon, when Winter has all our vales opprest,
When skies are cold and misty, and hail is hurling,
Wilt thou glide on the blue Pacific, or rest
In a summer haven asleep, thy white sails furling.

I there before thee, in the country that well thou knowest,
Already arrived am inhaling the odorous air:
I watch thee enter unerringly where thou goest,
And anchor queen of the strange shipping there,
Thy sails for awnings spread, thy masts bare:
Nor is aught from the foaming reef to the snow-capped, grandest
Peak, that is over the feathery palms more fair
Than thou, so upright, so stately, and still thou standest.

And yet, O splendid ship, unhailed and nameless,
I know not if, aiming a fancy, I rightly divine
That thou hast a purpose joyful, a courage blameless,
Thy port assured in a happier land than mine.
But for all I have given thee, beauty enough is thine,
As thou, aslant with trim tackle and shrouding,
From the proud nostril curve of a prow's line
In the offing scatterest foam, thy white sails crowding.

Robert Bridges.

CLIX

TEMPIO DI VENERE

A MARBLE ruin nigh forgotten,
Fronts sheer on Naples bay;
Its cornice stones are weather-rotten,
Stained by both rain and spray.

Its steps the mounting shore has buried,
All save the topmost three,
To which small waves run up like hurried
Sly kisses of the sea.

Its fluted columns crevice-jointed
Must totter every storm.
Bird-droppings have its eaves anointed,
Blunted each moulding's form.

With pavement chequer-rich sand-whitened,
Which tell-tales flaws of wind—
With walls, that once gay pictures brightened,
Blank as an old man's mind—

For fisher's painted boat 'tis stable,
Festooned with nets and cords,
Littered with dead-eyes, ends of cable,
Crab-baskets, boat-hooks, boards.

A wreckage mast, its only rafter,
Supports an old tanned sail.
Here Venus dwelt who so loved laughter;
Here now chinks flute and wail.

Here once hte pirate-Pompey's seaman
Offered her shells and gold;
Here oft, flogged slave or pious leman
Complained that hearts are sold.

No more here marble limbs shall glisten,
Nor carved face smile here more,
And, bending forward half to listen,
Prompt those who mute adore.

Yet, though he call no goddess mother,
A child bathed here to-day
Who, naked, was as Cupid's brother,
So sturdy, arch, and gay!

T. Sturge Moore.

CLX

GATES OF DAMASCUS

Four great gates has the city of Damascus,
And four Grand Wardens, on their spears reclining,
All day long stand like tall stone men
And sleep on the towers when the moon is shining.

This is the song of the East Gate Warden
When he locks the great gate and smokes in his garden.

Postern of Fate, the Desert Gate, Disaster's Cavern, Fort of Fear,
The Portal of Bagdad am I, the Doorway of Diarbekir.

The Persian Dawn with new desires may net the
flushing mountain spires:
But my gaunt buttress still rejects the suppliance
of those mellow fires.

Pass not beneath, O Caravan, or pass not singing.
Have you heard
That silence where the birds are dead yet some-
thing pipeth like a bird?

Pass not beneath! Men say there blows in stony
deserts still a rose
But with no scarlet to her leaf—and from whose
heart no perfume flows.

Wilt thou bloom red where she buds pale, thy
sister rose? Wilt thou not fail
When noonday flashes like a flail? Leave
nightingale the caravan!

Pass then, pass all! "Bagdad!" ye cry, and down
the billows of blue sky
Ye beat the bell that beats to hell, and who shall
thrust ye back? Not I.

The Sun who flashes through the head and paints
the shadows green and red,—
The Sun shall eat thy fleshless dead, O Caravan,
O Caravan!

And one who licks his lips for thirst with fevered
eyes shall face in fear
The palms that wave, the streams that burst, his
last mirage, O Caravan!

And one—the bird-voiced Singing-man—shall fall behind thee, Caravan!
And God shall meet him in the night, and he shall sing as best he can.

And one the Bedouin shall slay, and one, sand-stricken on the way,
Go dark and blind; and one shall say—"How lonely is the Caravan!"

Pass out beneath, O Caravan, Doom's Caravan, Death's Caravan!
I had not told ye, fools, so much, save that I heard your Singing-man.

This was sung by the West Gate's keeper
When heaven's hollow dome grew deeper.

I am the gate toward the sea: O sailor men, pass out from me!
I hear you high on Lebanon, singing the marvels of the sea.

The dragon-green, the luminous, the dark, the serpent-haunted sea,
The snow-besprinkled wine of earth, the white-and-blue flower foaming sea.

Beyond the sea are towns with towers, carved with lions and lily flowers,
And not a soul in all those lonely streets to while away the hours.

Beyond the towns an isle where, bound, a naked
giant bites the ground:
The shadow of a monstrous wing looms on his
back: and still no sound.

Beyond the isle a rock that screams like madmen
shouting in their dreams,
From whose dark issues night and day blood
crashes in a thousand streams.

Beyond the rock is Restful Bay, where no wind
breathes or ripple stirs,
And there on Roman ships, they say, stand rows
of metal mariners.

Beyond the bay in utmost West old Solomon the
Jewish King
Sits with his beard upon his breast, and grips and
guards his magic ring:

And when that ring is stolen, he will rise in out-
raged majesty,
And take the World upon his back, and fling the
World beyond the sea.

This is the song of the North Gate's master,
Who singeth fast, but drinketh faster.

I am the gay Aleppo Gate: a dawn, a dawn and
thou art there:
Eat not thy heart with fear and care, O brother of
the beast we hate!

Thou hast not many miles to tread, nor other foes
than fleas to dread;
Homs shall behold thy morning meal and Hama
see thee safe in bed.

Take to Aleppo filigrane, and take them paste of
apricots,
And coffee tables botched with pearl, and little
beaten brassware pots:

And thou shalt sell thy wares for thrice the
Damascene retailers' price,
And buy a fat Armenian slave who smelleth
odorous and nice.

Some men of noble stock were made: some glory
in the murder-blade:
Some praise a Science or an Art, but I like
honourable Trade!

Sell them the rotten, buy the ripe! Their heads
are weak: their pockets burn.
Aleppo men are mighty fools. Salaam Aleikum!
Safe return!

This is the song of the South Gate holder,
A silver man, but his song is older.

I am the Gate that fears no fall: the Mihrab of
Damascus wall,
The bridge of booming Sinai: the Arch of Allah
all in all.

O spiritual pilgrim rise: the night has grown her
single horn:
The voices of the souls unborn are half adream
with Paradise.

To Meccah thou hast turned in prayer with aching
heart and eyes that burn:
Ah Hajji, whither wilt thou turn when thou art
there, when thou art there?

God be thy guide from camp to camp: God be
thy shade from well to well;
God grant beneath the desert stars thou hear the
Prophet's camel bell.

And God shall make thy body pure, and give thee
knowledge to endure.
This ghost-life's piercing phantom-pain, and bring
thee out to Life again.

And God shall make thy soul a Glass where
eighteen thousand Æons pass,
And thou shalt see the gleaming Worlds as men
see dew upon the grass.

And son of Islam, it may be that thou shalt learn
at journey's end
Who, walks thy garden eve on eve, and bows his
head, and calls thee Friend.

James Elroy Flecker.

CLXI

SENT FROM EGYPT WITH A FAIR ROBE OF TISSUE TO A SICILIAN VINE-DRESSER (*276* B.C.)

Put out to sea, if wine thou wouldest make
Such as is made in Cos: when open boat
May safely launch, advice of pilots take;
And find the deepest bottom, most remote
From all encroachment of the crumbling shore,
Where no fresh stream tempers the rich salt wave,
Forcing rash sweetness on sage ocean's brine;
As youthful shepherds pour
Their first love forth to Battos gnarled and grave,
Fooling shrewd age to bless some fond design.

Not after storm! but when, for a long spell,
No white-maned horse has raced across the blue,
Put from the beach! lest troubled be the well—
Less pure thy draught than from such depth were due.
Fast close thy largest jars, prepared and clean!
Next weigh each buoyant womb down through the flood,
Far down! when, with a cord the lid remove,
And it will fill unseen,
Swift as a heart Love smites sucks back the blood:—
This bubbles, deeper born than sighs, shall prove.

If thy bowed shoulders ache, as thou dost haul—
Those groan who climb with rich ore from the mine;
Labour untold round Ilion girt a wall;
A god toiled that Achilles' arms might shine;
Think of these things and double knit thy will!
Then, should the sun be hot on thy return,
Cover thy jars with piles of bladder weed,
Dripping, and fragrant still
From sea-wolds where it grows like bracken fern:
A grapnel dragged will soon supply thy need.

Home to a tun convey thy precious freight!
Wherein, for thirty days, it should abide,
Closed, yet not quite closed from the air, and wait
While, through dim stillness, slowly doth subside
Thick sediment. The humour of a day,
Which has defeated youth and health and joy,
Down, through a dreamless sleep, will settle thus,
Till riseth maiden gay
Set free from all glooms past—or else a boy
Once more a school-friend worthy Troilus.

Yet to such cool wood tank some dream might dip:
Vision of Aphrodite sunk to sleep,
Or of some sailor let down from a ship,
Young, dead, and lovely, while across the deep,
Through the calm night, his hoarse-voiced comrades chaunt—
So far at sea, they cannot reach the land
To lay him perfect in the warm brown earth.

Pray that such dreams there haunt!
While, through damp darkness, where thy tun
doth stand,
Cold salamanders sidle round its girth.

Gently draw off the clear and tomb it yet
For other twenty days, in cedarn casks!
Where through trance, surely, prophecy will set;
As, dedicated to light temple-tasks,
The young priest dreams the unknown mystery.
Through Ariadne, knelt disconsolate
In the sea's marge, so welled back warmth which
throbbed
With nuptial promise: she
Turned; and, half-choked through dewy glens,
some great,
Some magic drone of revel coming sobbed.

Of glorious fruit, indeed, must be thy choice,
Such as has fully ripened on the branch,
Such as due rain, then sunshine, made rejoice,
Which, pulped and coloured, now deep bloom
doth blanch;
Clusters like odes for victors in the games,
Strophe on strophe globed, pure nectar all!
Spread such to dry,—if Helios grant thee grace,
Exposed unto his flames
Two days, or if not, three; or, should rain fall;
Stretch them on hurdles in the house four days.

Grapes are not sharded chestnuts, which the tree
Lets fall to burst them on the ground, where red

Rolls forth the fruit, from white-lined wards set free,
And all undamaged glows 'mid husks it shed;
Nay, they are soft and should be singly stripped
From off the bunch, by maiden's dainty hand,
Then dropped through the cool silent depth to sink
(Coy, as herself hath slipped,
Bathing, from shelves in caves along the strand)
Till round each dark grape water barely wink;

Since some nine measures of sea-water fill
A butt of fifty, ere the plump fruit peep,
—Like sombre dolphin shoals when nights are still,
Which penned in Proteus' wizard circle sleep,
And 'twixt them glinting curves of silver glance
If Zephyr, dimpling dark calm, counts them o'er.—
Let soak thy fruit for two days thus, then tread!
While bare-legged bumpkins dance,
Bright from thy bursting press arched spouts shall pour,
And gurgling torrents towards thy vats run red.

Meanwhile the maidens, each with wooden rake,
Drag back the skins and laugh at aprons splashed;
Or youths rest, boasting how their brown arms ache,
So fast their shovels for so long have flashed,
Baffling their comrades' legs with mounting heaps.
Treble their labour! still the happier they,
Who at this genial task wear out long hours,
Till vast night round them creeps,

When soon the torch-light dance whirls them
away;
For gods who love wine double all their powers.

Iacchus is the always grateful god!
His vineyards are more fair than gardens far;
Hanging, like those of Babylon, they nod
O'er each Ionian cliff and hill-side scar!
While Cypris lends him saltness, depth, and peace;
The brown earth yields him sap for richest green;
And he has borrowed laughter from the sky;
Wildness from winds; and bees
Bring honey.—Then choose casks which thou
hast seen
Are leakless, very wholesome, and quite dry!

That Coan wine the very finest is,
I do assure thee, who have travelled much
And learned to judge of diverse vintages.
Faint not before the toil! this wine is such
As tempteth princes launch long pirate barks;—
From which may Zeus protect Sicilian bays,
And, ere long, me safe home from Egypt bring,
Letting no black-sailed sharks
Scent this king's gifts, for whom I sweeten praise
With those same songs thou didst to Chloë sing!

I wrote them 'neath the vine-cloaked elm, for
thee.
Recall those nights! our couches were a load
Of scented lentisk; upward, tree by tree,
Thy father's orchard sloped, and past us flowed

A stream sluiced for his vineyards; when, above,
The apples fell, they on to us were rolled,
But kept us not awake.—O Laco, own
How thou didst rave of love!
Now art thou staid, thy son is three years old;
But I, who made thee love-songs, live alone.

Muse thou at dawn o'er thy yet slumbering wife!—
Not chary of her best was nature there,
Who, though a third of her full gift of life
Was spent, still added beauties still more rare;
What calm slow days, what holy sleep at night,
Evolved her for long twilight trystings fraught
With panic blushes and tip-toe surmise:
And then, what mystic might—
All, with a crowning boon, through travail
brought!
Consider this and give thy best likewise!

Ungrateful be not! Laco, ne'er be that!
Well worth thy while to make such wine 'twould
be:
I see thy red face 'neath thy broad straw hat,
I see thy house, thy vineyards, Sicily!—
Thou dost demur, good but too easy friend!
Come, put those doubts away! thou hast strong
lads,
Brave wenches; on the steep beach lolls thy ship
Where vine-clad slopes descend,
Sheltering our bay, that headlong rillet glads,
Like a stripped child fain in the sea to dip.

T. Sturge Moore.

CLXII

WAR SONG OF THE SARACENS

We are they who come faster than fate: we are
they who ride early or late:
We storm at your ivory gate: Pale Kings of the
Sunset, beware!
Not on silk nor in samet we lie, not in curtained
solemnity die
Among women who chatter and cry, and children
who mumble a prayer.
But we sleep by the ropes of the camp, and we
rise with a shout, and we tramp
With the sun or the moon for a lamp, and the
spray of the wind in our hair.

From the lands, where the elephants are, to the
forts of Merou and Balghar,
Our steel we have brought and our star to shine
on the ruins of Rum.
We have marched from the Indus to Spain, and
by God we will go there again;
We have stood on the shore of the plain where
the Waters of Destiny boom.
A mart of destruction we made at Jalula where
men were afraid,
For death was a difficult trade, and the sword
was a broker of doom;

And the Spear was a Desert Physician who cured
not a few of ambition,
And drave not a few to perdition with medicine
bitter and strong:
And the shield was a grief to the fool and as
bright as a desolate pool,
And as straight as the rock of Stamboul when
their cavalry thundered along:
For the coward was drowned with the brave
when our battle sheered up like a wave,
And the dead to the desert we gave, and the
glory to God in our song.

James Elroy Flecker.

CLXIII

THE NIGHT HAS A THOUSAND EYES

The night has a thousand eyes,
And the day but one;
Yet the light of the bright world dies
With the dying sun.

The mind has a thousand eyes,
And the heart but one;
Yet the light of a whole life dies
When love is done.

Francis William Bourdillon.

CLXIV

ΕΡΩΣ

Why hast thou nothing in thy face?
Thou idol of the human race,
Thou tyrant of the human heart,
The flower of lovely youth that art;
Yea, and that standest in thy youth
An image of eternal Truth,
With thy exuberant flesh so fair,
That only Pheidias might compare,
Ere from his chaste marmoreal form
Time had decayed the colours warm;
Like to his gods in thy proud dress,
Thy starry sheen of nakedness.

Surely thy body is thy mind,
For in thy face is nought to find,
Only thy soft unchristen'd smile,
That shadows neither love nor guile,
But shameless will and power immense,
In secret sensuous innocence.

O king of joy, what is thy thought?
I dream thou knowest it is nought,
And wouldst in darkness come, but thou
Makest the light where'er thou go.
Ah yet no victim of thy grace,
None who e'er long'd for thy embrace,
Hath cared to look upon thy face.

Robert Bridges.

CLXV

DOWN BY THE SALLEY GARDENS

Down by the salley gardens my love and I did meet;
She passed the salley gardens with little snow-white feet.
She bid me take love easy, as the leaves grow on the tree;
But I, being young and foolish, with her would not agree.

In a field by the river my love and I did stand,
And on my leaning shoulder she laid her snow-white hand.
She bid me take life easy, as the grass grows on the weirs;
But I was young and foolish, and now am full of tears.

William Butler Yeats.

CLXVI

AFTER TWO YEARS

She is all so slight
And tender and white
As a May morning.
She walks without hood
At dusk. It is good
To hear her sing.

It is God's will
That I shall love her still
  As he loves Mary,
And night and day
I will go forth to pray
  That she love me.

She is as gold
Lovely, and far more cold.
  Do thou pray with me,
For if I win grace
To kiss twice her face
  God has done well to me.

Richard Aldington.

CLXVII

ET SUNT COMMERCIA CŒLI

I did not raise mine eyes to hers,
  Although I knew she passed me near:
I said, "Her shadow round me stirs;
  It is enough that she is here,
And that, for once, my way is hers."

I did not look upon her face,
  I knew with whom her heart confers;
For more, that moment had no place:
  I did not raise mine eyes to hers,
I did not look upon her face.

Herbert P. Horne.

CLXVIII

THE HEART OF THE WOMAN

O WHAT to me the little room
That was brimmed up with prayer and rest;
He bade me out into the gloom,
And my breast lies upon his breast.

O what to me my mother's care,
The house where I was safe and warm;
The shadowy blossom of my hair
Will hide us from the bitter storm.

O hiding hair and dewy eyes,
I am no more with life and death,
My heart upon his warm heart lies,
My breath is mixed into his breath.

William Butler Yeats.

CLXIX

THE HILL

BREATHLESS, we flung us on the windy hill,
Laughed in the sun, and kissed the lovely grass.
You said, "Through glory and ecstasy we pass;
Wind, sun, and earth remain, the birds sing still,
When we are old, are old. . . ." "And when we die
All's over that is ours; and life burns on
Through other lovers, other lips," said I,
"Heart of my heart, our heaven is now, is won!"

"We are Earth's best, that learnt her lesson here.
Life is our cry. We have kept the faith!" we said;
"We shall go down with unreluctant tread
Rose-crowned into the darkness! . . ." Proud we were,
And laughed, that had such brave true things to say.
And then you suddenly cried, and turned away.

Rupert Brooke.

CLXX

"NON SUM QUALIS ERAM BONAE SUB REGNO CYNARAE"

Last night, ah, yesternight, betwixt her lips and mine
There fell thy shadow, Cynara! thy breath was shed
Upon my soul between the kisses and the wine;
And I was desolate and sick of an old passion,
Yea, I was desolate and bowed my head:
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion.

All night upon mine heart I felt her warm heart beat,
Night-long within mine arms in love and sleep she lay;

Surely the kisses of her bought red mouth were sweet;
But I was desolate and sick of an old passion,
When I awoke and found the dawn was grey:
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion.

I have forgot much, Cynara! gone with the wind,
Flung roses, roses, riotously with the throng,
Dancing, to put thy pale, lost lilies out of mind;
But I was desolate and sick of an old passion,
Yea, all the time, because the dance was long:
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion.

I cried for madder music and for stronger wine,
But when the feast is finished and the lamps expire,
Then falls thy shadow, Cynara! the night is thine;
And I am desolate and sick of an old passion,
Yea, hungry for the lips of my desire:
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion.

Ernest Dowson.

CLXXI

O WOMAN of my love, I am walking with you on the sand,
And the moon's white on the sand and the foam's white in the sea;
And I am thinking my own thoughts, and your hand is on my hand,
And your heart thinks by my side, and it's not thinking of me.

O woman of my love, the world is narrow and
wide,
And I wonder which is the lonelier of us two?
You are thinking of one who is near to your heart,
and far from your side;
I am thinking my own thoughts, and they are all
thoughts of you.

Arthur Symons.

CLXXII

THE APPARITION

My dead Love came to me, and said:
"God gives me one hour's rest
To spend upon the earth with thee:
How shall we spend it best?"

"Why, as of old," I said; and so
We quarrelled as of old.
But when I turn'd to make my peace
That one short hour was told.

Stephen Phillips.

CLXXIII

I HAVE BEEN THROUGH THE GATES

His heart, to me, was a place of palaces and
pinnacles and shining towers;
I saw it then as we see things in dreams,—I do
not remember how long I slept;

I remember the trees, and the high, white walls,
and how the sun was always on the towers;
The walls are standing to-day, and the gates: I
have been through the gates, I have groped,
I have crept
Back, back. There is dust in the streets, and
blood; they are empty; darkness is over
them;
His heart is a place with the lights gone out, for-
saken by great winds and the heavenly rain,
unclean and unswept,
Like the heart of the holy city, old, blind, beautiful
Jerusalem,
Over which Christ wept.

Charlotte Mew.

CLXXIV

THE TRAGIC MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS

I could wish to be dead!
Too quick with life were the tears I shed,
Too sweet for tears is the life I led;
And ah, too lonesome my marriage-bed!
I could wish to be dead.

I could wish to be dead,
For just a word that rings in my head;
Too dear, too dear are the words he said,
They must never be remembered.
I could wish to be dead.

I could wish to be dead:
The wish to be loved is all mis-read,
And to love, one learns when one is wed,
Is to suffer bitter shame; instead
I could wish to be dead.

Michael Field.

CLXXV

She comes not when Noon is on the roses—
Too bright is Day.
She comes not to the soul till it reposes
From work and play.

But when Night is on the hills, and the great Voices
Roll in from sea,
By starlight and by candlelight and dreamlight
She comes to me.

Herbert Trench.

CLXXVI

RENOUNCEMENT

I must not think of thee; and, tired yet strong,
I shun the thought that lurks in all delight—
The thought of thee—and in the blue Heaven's height,
And in the sweetest passage of a song.

Oh, just beyond the fairest thoughts that throng
This breast, the thought of thee waits, hidden yet
bright;
But it must never, never come in sight;
I must stop short of thee the whole day long.

But when sleep comes to close each difficult day,
When night gives pause to the long watch I keep,
And all my bonds I needs must loose apart,
Must doff my will as raiment laid away,—
With the first dream that comes with the first sleep
I run, I run, I am gathered to thy heart.

Alice Meynell.

CLXXVII

NEVER GIVE ALL THE HEART

Never give all the heart, for love
Will hardly seem worth thinking of
To passionate women if it seem
Certain, and they never dream
That it fades out from kiss to kiss;
For everything that's lovely is
But a brief, dreamy, kind delight.
O never give the heart outright,
For they, for all smooth lips can say,
Have given their hearts up to the play.
And who could play it well enough
If deaf and dumb and blind with love?
He that made this knows all the cost,
For he gave all his heart and lost.

William Butler Yeats.

CLXXVIII

We were not made for refuges of lies,
  And false embattled bulwarks will not screen us.
We mocked the careful shieldings of the wise,
  And only utter truth can be between us.

Long suns and moons have wrought this day at length,
  The heavens in naked majesty have told thee.
To see me as I am have thou the strength;
  And, even as thou art, I dare behold thee.

Mary Coleridge.

CLXXIX

THE VISITING SEA

As the inhastening tide doth roll,
Home from the deep, along the whole
  Wide shining strand, and floods the caves
  —Your love comes filling with happy waves
The open sea-shore of my soul.

But inland from the seaward spaces,
None knows, not even you, the places
  Brimmed, at your coming, out of sight,
  —The little solitudes of delight
This tide constrains in dim embraces.

You see the happy shore, wave-rimmed,
But know not of the quiet dimmed
  Rivers your coming floods and fills,
  The little pools 'mid happier hills,
My silent rivulets, over-brimmed.

What, I have secrets from you? Yes.
But, visiting Sea, your love doth press
  And reach in further than you know,
  And fills all these; and, when you go,
There's loneliness in loneliness.

Alice Meynell.

CLXXX

DREAM-TRYST

The breaths of kissing night and day
  Were mingled in the eastern Heaven:
Throbbing with unheard melody
  Shook Lyra all its star-chord seven:
    When dusk shrunk cold, and light trod shy,
      And dawn's grey eyes were troubled grey;
    And souls went palely up the sky,
      And mine to Lucidé.

There was no change in her sweet eyes
  Since last I saw those sweet eyes shine;
There was no change in her deep heart
  Since last that deep heart knocked at mine.

Her eyes were clear, her eyes were Hope's
  Wherein did ever come and go
The sparkle of the fountain drops
  From her sweet soul below.

The chambers in the house of dreams
  Are fed with so divine an air,
That Time's hoar wings grow young therein,
  And they who walk there are most fair.
  I joyed for me, I joyed for her,
    Who with the Past meet girt about:
  Where our last kiss still warms the air,
    Nor can her eyes go out.

Francis Thompson.

CLXXXI

TO A LOST LOVE

I CANNOT look upon thy grave,
  Though there the rose is sweet:
Better to hear the long wave wash
  These wastes about my feet!

Shall I take comfort? Dost thou live
  A spirit, though afar,
With a deep hush about thee, like
  The stillness round a star?

Oh, thou art cold! In that high sphere
  Thou art a thing apart,
Losing in saner happiness
  This madness of the heart.

And yet, at times, thou still shalt feel
A passing breath, a pain;
Disturb'd, as though a door in heaven
Had oped and closed again.

And thou shalt shiver, while the hymns,
The solemn hymns shall cease;
A moment half remember me:
Then turn away to peace.

But oh, for evermore thy look,
Thy laugh, thy charm, thy tone,
Thy sweet and wayward earthliness,
Dear trivial things, are gone!

Therefore I look not on thy grave,
Though there the rose is sweet;
But rather hear the loud wave wash
These wastes about my feet.

Stephen Phillips.

CLXXXII

Whether I live, or whether I die,
Whatever the worlds I see,
I shall come to you by-and-by,
And you will come to me.

Whoever was foolish, we were wise,
We crossed the boundary line,
I saw my soul look out of your eyes,
You saw your soul in mine.

Mary Coleridge.

CLXXXIII

My delight and thy delight
Walking, like two angels white,
In the gardens of the night:

My desire and thy desire
Twining to a tongue of fire,
Leaping live, and laughing higher;

Thro' the everlasting strife
In the mystery of life.

Love, from whom the world begun,
Hath the secret of the sun.

Love can tell, and love alone,
Whence the million stars were strewn,
Why each atom knows its own,
How, in spite of woe and death,
Gay is life, and sweet is breath:

This he taught us, this we knew,
Happy in his science true,
Hand in hand as we stood
'Neath the shadows of the wood,
Heart to heart as we lay
In the dawning of the day.

Robert Bridges.

CLXXXIV

BAILE AND AILLINN

. . . . .

About the time when Christ was born,
When the long wars for the White Horn
And the Brown Bull had not yet come,
Young Baile Honey-Mouth, whom some
Called rather Baile Little-Land,
Rode out of Emain with a band
Of harpers and young men; and they
Imagined, as they struck the way
To many-pastured Muirthemne,
That all things fell out happily,
And there, for all that fools had said,
Baile and Aillinn would be wed.

They found an old man running there:
He had ragged long grass-coloured hair;
He had knees that stuck out of his hose;
He had puddle water in his shoes;
He had half a cloak to keep him dry,
Although he had a squirrel's eye.

. . . . .

That runner said: "I am from the south;
I run to Baile Honey-Mouth,
To tell him how the girl Aillinn
Rode from the country of her kin,
And old and young men rode with her:
For all that country had been astir

If anybody half as fair
Had chosen a husband anywhere
But where it could see her every day.
When they had ridden a little way
An old man caught the horse's head
With: 'You must home again, and wed
With somebody in your own land.'
A young man cried and kissed her hand,
'O lady, wed with one of us';
And when no face grew piteous
For any gentle thing she spake,
She fell and died of the heart-break."

Because a lover's heart's worn out,
Being tumbled and blown about
By its own blind imagining,
And will believe that anything
That is bad enough to be true, is true,
Baile's heart was broken in two;
And he being laid upon green boughs,
Was carried to the goodly house
Where the Hound of Ulad sat before
The brazen pillars of his door,
His face bowed low to weep the end
Of the harper's daughter and her friend.
For although years had passed away
He always wept them on that day,
For on that day they had been betrayed;
And now that Honey-Mouth is laid
Under a cairn of sleepy stone
Before his eyes, he has tears for none,
Although he is carrying stone, but two
For whom the cairn's but heaped anew.

. . . . .

Now had that old gaunt crafty one,
Gathering his cloak about him, run
Where Aillinn rode with waiting maids,
Who amid leafy lights and shades
Dreamed of the hands that would unlace
Their bodices in some dim place
When they had come to the marriage bed;
And harpers, pacing with high head
As though their music were enough
To make the savage heart of love
Grow gentle without sorrowing,
Imagining and pondering
Heaven knows what calamity;

"Another's hurried off," cried he,
"From heat and cold and wind and wave;
They have heaped the stones above his grave
In Muirthemne, and over it
In changeless Ogham letters writ—
Baile, that was of Rury's seed.
But the gods long ago decreed
No waiting maid should ever spread
Baile and Aillinn's marriage bed,
For they should clip and clip again
Where wild bees hive on the Great Plain.
Therefore it is but little news
That put this hurry in my shoes."

Then seeing that he scarce had spoke
Before her love-worn heart had broke,
He ran and laughed until he came
To that high hill the herdsmen name

The Hill Seat of Leighin, because
Some god or king had made the laws
That held the land together there,
In old times among the clouds of the air.

That old man climbed; the day grew dim;
Two swans came flying up to him,
Linked by a gold chain each to each,
And with low murmuring laughing speech
Alighted on the windy grass.
They knew him: his changed body was
Tall, proud and ruddy, and light wings
Were hovering over the harp-strings
That Etain, Midhir's wife, had wove
In the hid place, being crazed by love.

What shall I call them? fish that swim,
Scale rubbing scale where light is dim
By a broad water-lily leaf;
Or mice in the one wheaten sheaf
Forgotten at the threshing place;
Or birds lost in the one clear space
Of morning light in a dim sky;
Or, it may be, the eyelids of one eye,
Or the door pillars of one house,
Or two sweet blossoming apple-boughs
That have one shadow on the ground;
Or the two strings that made one sound
Where that wise harper's finger ran.
For this young girl and this young man
Have happiness without an end,
Because they have made so good a friend.

They know all wonders, for they pass
The towery gates of Gorias,
And Findrias and Falias,
And long-forgotten Murias,
Among the giant kings whose hoard,
Cauldron and spear and stone and sword,
Was robbed before earth gave the wheat;
Wandering from broken street to street
They come where some huge watcher is,
And tremble with their love and kiss.

They know undying things, for they
Wander where earth withers away,
Though nothing troubles the great streams
But light from the pale stars, and gleams
From the holy orchards, where there is none
But fruit that is of precious stone,
Or apples of the sun and moon.

What were our praise to them? They eat
Quiet's wild heart, like daily meat;
Who when night thickens are afloat
On dappled skins in a glass boat,
Far out under a windless sky;
While over them birds of Aengus fly,
And over the tiller and the prow,
And waving white wings to and fro
Awaken wanderings of light air
To stir their coverlet and their hair.

And poets found, old writers say,
A yew tree where his body lay;

But a wild apple hid the grass
With its sweet blossom where hers was;
And being in good heart, because
A better time had come again
After the deaths of many men,
And that long fighting at the ford,
They wrote on tablets of thin board,
Made of the apple and the yew,
All the love stories that they knew.

. . . . .

William Butler Yeats.

CLXXXV

TO MEMORY

Strange Power, I know not what thou art,
Murderer or mistress of my heart.
I know I'd rather meet the blow
Of my most unrelenting foe
Than live—as I now live—to be
Slain twenty times a day by thee.

Yet, when I would command thee hence,
Thou mockest at the vain pretence,
Murmuring in mine ear a song
Once loved, alas! forgotten long;
And on my brow I feel a kiss
That I would rather die than miss.

Mary Coleridge.

CLXXXVI

A CHILD'S KISS

ONCE, bright Sylviola! in days not far,
Once—in that nightmare-time which still doth haunt
My dreams, a grim, unbidden visitant—
Forlorn, and faint, and stark,
I had endured through watches of the dark
The abashless inquisition of each star,
Yea, was the outcast mark
Of all those heavenly passers' scrutiny;
Stood bound and helplessly
For Time to shoot his barbèd minutes at me;
Suffered the trampling hoof of every hour
In night's slow-wheelèd car;
Until the tardy dawn dragged me at length
From under those dread wheels; and, bled of strength,
I waited the inevitable last.
Then there came past
A child; like thee, a spring-flower; but a flower
Fallen from the budded coronal of Spring,
And through the city-streets blown withering.
She passed,—O brave, sad, lovingest, tender thing!—
And of her own scant pittance did she give,
That I might eat and live:
Then fled, a swift and trackless fugitive.
Therefore I kissed in thee
The heart of Childhood, so divine for me;

And her, through what sore ways,
And what unchildish days,
Borne from me now, as then, a trackless fugitive.
Therefore I kissed in thee
Her, child! and innocency,
And spring, and all things that have gone from me,
And that shall never be;
All vanished hopes, and all most hopeless bliss,
Came with thee to my kiss.
And ah! so long myself had strayed afar
From child, and woman, and the boon earth's green,
And all wherewith life's face is fair beseen;
Journeying its journey bare
Five suns, except of the all-kissing sun
Unkissed of one;
Almost I had forgot
The healing harms,
And whitest witchery, a-lurk in that
Authentic cestus of two girdling arms:
And I remembered not
The subtle sanctities which dart
From childish lips' unvalued precious brush,
Nor how it makes the sudden lilies push
Between the loosening fibres of the heart.
Then, that thy little kiss
Should be to me all this,
Let workaday wisdom blink sage lids thereat;
Which towers a flight three hedgerows high, poor bat!
And straightway charts me out the empyreal air.

Its chart I wing not by, its canon of worth
Scorn not, nor reck though mine should breed it
mirth:
And howso thou and I may be disjoint,
Yet still my falcon spirit makes her point
Over the covert where
Thou, sweetest quarry, hast put in from her!

Francis Thompson.

CLXXXVII

So sweet love seemed that April morn,
When first we kissed beside the thorn,
So strangely sweet, it was not strange
We thought that love could never change.

But I can tell—let truth be told—
That love will change in growing old;
Though day by day is nought to see,
So delicate his motions be.

And in the end 'twill come to pass
Quite to forget what once he was,
Nor even in fancy to recall
The pleasure that was all in all.

His little spring, that sweet we found,
So deep in summer floods is drowned,
I wonder, bathed in joy complete,
How love so young could be so sweet.

Robert Bridges.

CLXXXVIII

If all the tears thou madest mine
Set in thy heaven for stars could shine,
  Thou shouldst not want for light,
  Even in the darkest night.

If all the joys thou madest one
To light my heart could be thy sun,
  So great would be the light
  Thou never shouldst have night.

Margaret L. Woods.

CLXXXIX

The clouds that are so light,
Beautiful, swift and bright,
Cast shadows on field and park
Of the earth that is so dark.

And even so now, light one!
Beautiful, swift and bright one!
You let fall on a heart that was dark,
Unillumined, a deeper mark.

But clouds would have, without earth
To shadow, far less worth:
Away from your shadow on me
Your beauty less would be,

And if it still be treasured
In age hence, it shall be measured
By this small dark spot
Without which it were not.

Edward Thomas.

CXC

THE FOLLY OF BEING COMFORTED

One that is ever kind said yesterday:
"Your well-beloved's hair has threads of grey,
And little shadows come about her eyes;
Time can but make it easier to be wise
Though now it seem impossible, and so
Patience is all that you have need of."
No,
I have not a crumb of comfort, not a grain.
Time can but make her beauty over again:
Because of that great nobleness of hers
The fire that stirs about her, when she stirs
Burns but more clearly. O she had not these ways
When all the wild summer was in her gaze.
O heart! O heart! if she'd but turn her head,
You'd know the folly of being comforted.

William Butler Yeats.

CXCI

What is this atom which contains the whole,
This miracle which needs adjuncts so strange,
This, which imagined God and is the soul,
The steady star persisting amid change?

What waste, that smallness of such power should need
Such clumsy tools so easy to destroy,
Such wasteful servants difficult to feed,
Such indirect dark avenues to joy.
Why, if its business is not mainly earth,
Should it demand such heavy chains to sense?
A heavenly thing demands a swifter birth,
A quicker hand to act intelligence;
An earthly thing were better like the rose,
At peace with clay from which its beauty grows.

John Masefield.

CXCII

O LITTLE self, within whose smallness lies
All that man was, and is, and will become,
Atom unseen that comprehends the skies
And tells the tracks by which the planets roam;
That, without moving, knows the joys of wings,
The tiger's strength, the eagle's secrecy,
And in the hovel can consort with kings,
Or clothe a God with his own mystery.
O with what darkness do we cloak thy light,
What dusty folly gather thee for food,
Thou who alone art knowledge and delight,
The heavenly bread, the beautiful, the good.
O living self, O God, O morning star,
Give us thy light, forgive us what we are.

John Masefield.

CXCIII

NIGHT-ERRANTRY

THREE long breaths of the blessed night
And I am fast asleep;
No need to read by candle-light
Or count a flock of sheep.

Deep, deep I lie as any dead,
Save my breath comes and goes;
The holy dark is like a bed
With violet curtains close.

And while enfolded I lie there
Until the dawn of day,
My body is the prisoner,
My soul slips out to play.

A-tiptoe on the window-sill
He listens like a mouse,
The calling wind blows from the hill
And circles round the house.

Above the voices of the town
It whispers in the tree,
And brings the message of the Down:
'Tis there my soul would be.

Then while enchain'd my body lies
Like a dead man in grave,
Thither on trackless feet he hies,
On wings that make no wave.

The dawn comes out in cold gray sark
And finds him flitting there
Among the creatures of the dark,
Vixen and brock and hare.

O wild white face that's none of mine,
O eager eyes unknown,
What will you do with Prosperine,
And what shall I, alone?

O flying feet, O naked sides,
O tresses flowing free,
And are you his that all day bides
So soberly in me?

The sun streams up behind the hill
And strikes the window-pane;
The empty land lies hot and still,
And I am I again.

Maurice Hewlett.

CXCIV

THE WASTE PLACES

As a naked man I go
  Through the desert sore afraid,
Holding up my head, although
  I am as frightened as a maid.

The crouching lion there I saw
  From barren rocks lift up his eye,
He parts the cactus with his paw,
  He stares at me as I go by.

He would follow on my trace
  If he knew I was afraid,
If he knew my hardy face
  Hides the terrors of a maid.

In the night he rises, and
  He stretches forth, he snuffs the air,
He roars and leaps along the sand,
  He creeps and watches everywhere.

His burning eyes, his eyes of bale,
  Through the darkness I can see;
He lashes fiercely with his tail,
  He would love to spring at me.

I am the lion in his lair,
  I am the fear that frightens me,
I am the desert of despair,
  And the nights of agony.

Night or day, whate'er befall,
  I must walk that desert land,
Until I can dare to call
  The lion out to lick my hand.

James Stephens.

CXCV

BEWARE

I CLOSED my hands upon a moth
  And when I drew my palms apart,
Instead of dusty, broken wings,
  I found a bleeding human heart.

I crushed my foot upon a worm
That had my garden for its goal,
But when I drew my foot aside
I found a dying human soul.

Dora Sigerson Shorter.

CXCVI

REPROACH

Your grieving moonlight face looks down
Through the forest of my fears,
Crowned with a spiny bramble-crown,
Dew-dropped with evening tears.

Why do you spell "untrue, unkind,"
Reproachful eyes, plaguing my sleep?
I am not guilty in my mind
Of aught would make you weep.

Untrue? but how, what broken oath?
Unkind? I know not even your name.
Unkind, untrue, you charge me both,
Scalding my heart with shame.

The black trees shudder, dropping snow,
The stars tumble and spin.
Speak, speak, or how may a child know
His ancestral sin?

Robert Graves.

CXCVII

Justus quidem tu es, Domime, si disputem tecum, etc.

THOU art indeed just, Lord, if I contend
With thee; but, sir, so what I plead is just.
Why do sinners' ways prosper? and why must
Disappointment all I endeavour end?
  Wert thou my enemy, O thou my friend,
How wouldst thou worse, I wonder, than thou dost
Defeat, thwart me? Oh, the sots and thralls of lust
Do in spare hours more thrive than I that spend,
Sir, life upon thy cause. See, banks and brakes
Now, leavèd how thick! lacèd they are again
With fretty chervil, look, and fresh wind shakes
Them; birds build—but not I build; no, but strain,
Time's eunuch, and not breed one work that wakes.
Mine, O thou lord of life, send my roots rain.

Gerard Hopkins.

CXCVIII

OUR LADY

MOTHER of God! no lady thou:
  Common woman of common earth!
OUR LADY ladies call thee now,
  But Christ was never of gentle birth;
  A common man of the common earth.

For God's ways are not as our ways.
The noblest lady in the land
Would have given up half her days,
Would have cut off her right hand,
To bear the Child that was God of the land.

Never a lady did He choose,
Only a maid of low degree,
So humble she might not refuse
The carpenter of Galilee.
A daughter of the people, she.

Out she sang the song of her heart.
Never a lady so had sung.
She knew no letters, had no art;
To all mankind, in woman's tongue,
Hath Israelitish Mary sung.

And still for men to come she sings,
Nor shall her singing pass away.
"He hath filled the hungry with good things"—
Oh, listen, lords and ladies gay!—
"And the rich He hath sent empty away."

Mary Coleridge.

CXCIX

THE LADY POVERTY

I MET her on the Umbrian hills,
Her hair unbound, her feet unshod:
As one whom secret glory fills
She walked, alone with God.

I met her in the city street:
Oh, changed was all her aspect then!
With heavy eyes and weary feet
She walked alone, with men.

Evelyn Underhill.

CC

HOLY POVERTY

Crowning Life so over-wise,
You have hid his tender eyes.
Dressing Life so over-fine,
You have starched his grace divine.
Ease his brows of irking crown,
He has smiles for all the town.
Doff his cloak and let him run,
He will lead where shines the sun.
Loose his mufflings, you shall prove,
Life's bare lips are lips of love.

Arthur Shearly Cripps.

CCI

BY THE STATUE OF KING CHARLES AT CHARING CROSS

Sombre and rich, the skies;
Great glooms, and starry plains.
Gently the night wind sighs;
Else a vast silence reigns.

The splendid silence clings
Around me: and around
The saddest of all kings
Crowned, and again discrowned.

Comely and calm, he rides
Hard by his own Whitehall:
Only the night wind glides:
No crowds, nor rebels, brawl.

Gone, too, his Court; and yet,
The stars his courtiers are:
Stars in their stations set;
And every wandering star.

Alone he rides, alone,
The fair and fatal king:
Dark night is all his own,
That strange and solemn thing.

Which are more full of fate:
The stars; or those sad eyes?
Which are more still and great:
Those brows; or the dark skies?

Although his whole heart yearn
In passionate tragedy:
Never was face so stern
With sweet austerity.

Vanquished in life, his death
By beauty made amends:
The passing of his breath
Won his defeated ends.

Brief life, and hapless? Nay:
Through death, life grew sublime.
Speak after sentence? Yea:
And to the end of time.

Armoured he rides, his head
Bare to the stars of doom:
He triumphs now, the dead,
Beholding London's gloom.

Our wearier spirit faints,
Vexed in the world's employ:
His soul was of the saints;
And art to him was joy.

King, tried in fires of woe!
Men hunger for thy grace:
And through the night I go,
Loving thy mournful face.

Yet, when the city sleeps;
When all the cries are still:
The stars and heavenly deeps
Work out a perfect will.

Lionel Johnson.

CCII

TO THE FORGOTTEN DEAD

To the forgotten dead,
Come, let us drink in silence ere we part.
To every fervent yet resolvèd heart

That brought its tameless passion and its tears
Renunciation and laborious years,
To lay the deep foundations of our race,
To rear its mighty ramparts overhead
And light its pinnacles with golden grace.
To the unhonoured dead.

To the forgotten dead,
Whose dauntless hands were stretched to grasp the rein
Of Fate and hurl into the void again
Her thunder-hoofèd horses, rushing blind
Earthward along the courses of the wind.
Among the stars, along the wind in vain
Their souls were scattered and their blood was shed,
And nothing, nothing of them doth remain.
To the thrice-perished dead.

Margaret L. Woods.

CCIII

A CHARM

Take of English earth as much
As either hand may rightly clutch.
In the taking of it breathe
Prayer for all who lie beneath.
Not the great nor well-bespoke
But the mere uncounted folk

Of whose life and death is none
Report or lamentation.
  Lay that earth upon thy heart,
  And thy sickness shall depart!

It shall sweeten and make whole
Fevered breath and festered soul.
It shall mightily restrain
Over-busy hand and brain.
It shall ease thy mortal strife
'Gainst the immortal woe of life,
Till thyself, restored, shall prove
By what grace the Heavens do move.

Take of English flowers these—
Spring's full-facèd primroses,
Summer's wild wide-hearted rose,
Autumn's wall-flower of the close,
And, thy darkness to illume,
Winter's bee-thronged ivy-bloom.
Seek and serve them where they bide
From Candlemas to Christmas-tide,
  For these simples, used aright,
  Can restore a failing sight.

These shall cleanse and purify
Webbed and inward-turning eye;
These shall show thee treasure hid,
Thy familiar fields amid;
And reveal (which is thy need)
Every man a King indeed!

Rudyard Kipling.

CCIV

THE DEATH OF ADMIRAL BLAKE

Laden with spoil of the South, fulfilled with the glory of achievement,
And freshly crowned with never-dying fame.
Sweeping by shores where the names are the names of the victories of England,
Across the Bay the squadron homeward came.

Proudly they came, but their pride was the pomp of a funeral at midnight,
When dreader yet the lonely morrow looms;
Few are the words that are spoken, and faces are gaunt beneath the torchlight
That does but darken more the nodding plumes.

Low on the field of his fame, past hope lay the Admiral triumphant,
And fain to rest him after all his pain;
Yet for the love that he bore to his own land, ever unforgotten,
He prayed to see the western hills again.

Fainter than stars in a sky long gray with the coming of the daybreak,
Or sounds of night that fade when night is done,
So in the death-dawn faded the splendour and loud renown of warfare,
And life of all its longings kept but one.

"Oh! to be there for an hour when the shade
draws in beside the hedgerows,
And falling apples wake the drowsy noon:
Oh! for the hour when the elms grow sombre and
human in the twilight,
And gardens dream beneath the rising moon.

"Only to look once more on the land of the
memories of childhood,
Forgetting weary winds and barren foam:
Only to bid farewell to the combe and the orchard
and the moorland,
And sleep at last among the fields of home!"

So he was silently praying, till now, when his
strength was ebbing faster,
The Lizard lay before them faintly blue;
Now on the gleaming horizon the white cliffs
laughed along the coast-line,
And now the forelands took the shapes they
knew.

There lay the Sound and the Island with green
leaves down beside the water,
The town, the Hoe, the masts with sunset
fired—
Dreams! ay, dreams of the dead! for the great
heart faltered on the threshold,
And darkness took the land his soul desired.

Henry Newbolt.

CCV

SUSSEX

God gave all men all earth to love,
But since our hearts are small,
Ordained for each one spot should prove
Beloved over all;
That, as He watched Creation's birth,
So we, in godlike mood,
May of our love create our earth
And see that it is good.

So one shall Baltic pines content,
As one some Surrey glade,
Or one the palm-grove's droned lament
Before Levuka's trade.
Each to his choice, and I rejoice
The lot has fallen to me
In a fair ground—in a fair ground—
Yea, Sussex by the sea!

No tender-hearted garden crowns,
No bosomed woods adorn
Our blunt, bow-headed, whale-backed Downs,
But gnarled and writhen thorn—
Bare slopes where chasing shadows skim,
And through the gaps revealed
Belt upon belt, the wooded, dim
Blue goodness of the Weald.

Clean of officious fence or hedge,
  Half-wild and wholly tame,
The wise turf cloaks the white cliff edge
  As when the Romans came.
What sign of those that fought and died
  At shift of sword and sword?
The barrow and the camp abide,
  The sunlight and the sward.

Here leaps ashore the full Sou'west
  All heavy-winged with brine,
Here lies above the folded crest
  The Channel's leaden line;
And here the sea-fogs lap and cling,
  And here, each warning each,
The sheep-bells and the ship-bells ring
  Along the hidden beach.

We have no waters to delight
  Our broad and brookless vales—
Only the dewpond on the height
  Unfed, that never fails,
Whereby no tattered herbage tells
  Which way the season flies—
Only our close-bit thyme that smells
  Like dawn in Paradise.

Here through the strong unhampered days
  The tinkling silence thrills;
Or little, lost, Down churches praise
  The Lord who made the hills;
But here the Old Gods guard their round,
  And, in her secret heart,

The heathen kingdom Wilfrid found
  Dreams, as she dwells, apart.

Though all the rest were all my share,
  With equal soul I'd see
Her nine-and-thirty sisters fair,
  Yet none more fair than she.
Choose ye your need from Thames to Tweed,
  And I will choose instead
Such lands as lie 'twixt Rake and Rye,
  Black Down and Beachy Head.

I will go out against the sun
  Where the rolled scarp retires,
And the Long Man of Wilmington
  Looks naked toward the shires;
And east till doubling Rother crawls
  To find the fickle tide,
By dry and sea-forgotten walls,
  Our ports of stranded pride.

I will go north about the shaws
  And the deep ghylls that breed
Huge oaks of old, the which we hold
  No more than "Sussex weed";
Or South where windy Piddinghoe's
  Begilded dolphin veers,
And black beside wide-bankèd Ouse
  Lie down our Sussex steers.

So to the land our hearts we give
  Till the sure magic strike,

And Memory, Use, and Love make live
  Us and our fields alike—
That deeper than our speech and thought,
  Beyond our reason's sway,
Clay of the pit whence we were wrought
  Yearns to its fellow-clay.

God gives all men all earth to love,
  But since man's heart is small,
Ordains for each one spot shall prove
  Beloved over all.
Each to his choice, and I rejoice
  The lot has fallen to me
In a fair ground—in a fair ground—
  Yea, Sussex by the sea!

Rudyard Kipling.

CCVI

A RUNNABLE STAG

When the pods went pop on the broom, green broom,
  And apples began to be golden-skinn'd,
We harbour'd a stag in the Priory coomb,
  And we feather'd his trail up-wind, up-wind,
  We feather'd his trail up-wind—
    A stag of warrant, a stag, a stag,
    A runnable stag, a kingly crop,
    Brow, bay and tray and three on top,
    A stag, a runnable stag.

Then the huntsman's horn rang yap, yap, yap,
And "Forwards" we heard the harbourer shout;
But 'twas only a brocket that broke a gap
In the beechen underwood, driven out,
From the underwood antler'd out
By warrant and might of the stag, the stag,
The runnable stag, whose lordly mind
Was bent on sleep, though beam'd and tined
He stood, a runnable stag.

So we tufted the covert till afternoon
With Tinkerman's Pup and Bell-of-the-North;
And hunters were sulky and hounds out of tune
Before we tufted the right stag forth,
Before we tufted him forth,
The stag of warrant, the wily stag,
The runnable stag with his kingly crop,
Brow, bay and tray and three on top,
The royal and runnable stag.

It was Bell-of-the-North and Tinkerman's Pup
That stuck to the scent till the copse was drawn.
"Tally ho! tally ho!" and the hunt was up,
The tufters whipp'd and the pack laid on,
The resolute pack laid on,
And the stag of warrant away at last,
The runnable stag, the same, the same,
His hoofs on fire, his horns like flame,
A stag, a runnable stag.

"Let your gelding be: if you check or chide
He stumbles at once and you're out of the hunt;

For three hundred gentlemen, able to ride,
On hunters accustom'd to bear the brunt,
Accustom'd to bear the brunt,
Are after the runnable stag, the stag,
The runnable stag with his kingly crop,
Brow, bay and tray and three on top,
The right, the runnable stag."

By perilous paths in coomb and dell,
The heather, the rocks, and the river-bed,
The pace grew hot, for the scent lay well,
And a runnable stag goes right ahead,
The quarry went right ahead—
Ahead, ahead, and fast and far;
His antler'd crest, his cloven hoof,
Brow, bay and tray and three aloof,
The stag, the runnable stag.

For a matter of twenty miles and more,
By the densest hedge and the highest wall,
Through herds of bullocks he baffled the lore
Of harbourer, huntsman, hounds and all,
Of harbourer, hounds and all—
The stag of warrant, the wily stag,
For twenty miles, and five and five,
He ran, and he never was caught alive,
This stag, this runnable stag.

When he turn'd at bay in the leafy gloom,
In the emerald gloom where the brook ran deep
He heard in the distance the rollers boom,
And he saw in a vision of peaceful sleep
In a wonderful vision of sleep,

A stag of warrant, a stag, a stag,
A runnable stag in a jewell'd bed,
Under the sheltering ocean dead,
A stag, a runnable stag.

So a fateful hope lit up his eye,
And he open'd his nostrils wide again,
And he toss'd his branching antlers high
As he headed the hunt down the Charlock glen
As he raced down the echoing glen—
For five miles more, the stag, the stag,
For twenty miles, and five and five,
Not to be caught now, dead or alive,
The stag, the runnable stag.

Three hundred gentlemen, able to ride,
Three hundred horses as gallant and free,
Beheld him escape on the evening tide,
Far out till he sank in the Severn Sea,
Till he sank in the depths of the sea—
The stag, the buoyant stag, the stag
That slept at last in a jewell'd bed
Under the sheltering ocean spread,
The stag, the runnable stag.

John Davidson.

CCVII

TO IRON-FOUNDERS AND OTHERS

When you destroy a blade of grass,
You poison England at her roots:

Remember no man's foot can pass
Where evermore no green life shoots.

You force the birds to wing too high
Where your unnatural vapours creep:
Surely the living rocks shall die
When birds no rightful distance keep.

You have brought down the firmament,
And yet no heaven is more near;
You shape huge deeds without event,
And half-made men believe and fear.

Your worship is your furnaces,
Which, like old idols, lost obscenes,
Have molten bowels; your vision is
Machines for making more machines.

O, you are busied in the night,
Preparing destinies of rust;
Iron misused must turn to blight
And dwindle to a tetter'd crust.

The grass, forerunner of life, has gone,
But plants that spring in ruins and shards
Attend until your dream is done:
I have seen hemlock in your yards.

The generations of the worm
Know not your loads piled on their soil;
Their knotted ganglions shall wax firm
Till your strong flagstones heave and toil.

When the old hollow'd earth is crack'd,
And when, to grasp more power and feasts,
Its ores are emptied, wasted, lack'd,
The middens of your burning beasts

Shall be raked over till they yield
Last priceless slags for fashionings high,
Ploughs to wake grass in every field,
Chisels men's hands to magnify.

Gordon Bottomley.

CCVIII

GIBRALTAR

Seven weeks of sea, and twice seven days of
storm
Upon the huge Atlantic, and once more
We ride into still water and the calm
Of a sweet evening, screen'd by either shore
Of Spain and Barbary. Our toils are o'er,
Our exile is accomplish'd. Once again
We look on Europe, mistress as of yore
Of the fair earth and of the hearts of men.
Ay, this is the famed rock which Hercules
And Goth and Moor bequeath'd us. At this door
England stands sentry. God! to hear the shrill
Sweet treble of her fifes upon the breeze,
And at the summons of the rock gun's roar
To see her redcoats marching from the hill!

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt.

CCIX

DRAKE'S DRUM

Drake he's in his hammock an' a thousand mile away,
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?)
Slung atween the round shot in Nombre Dios Bay,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.
Yarnder lumes the Island, yarnder lie the ships,
Wi' sailor lads a-dancin' heel-an'-toe,
An' the shore-lights flashin', an' the night-tide dashin',
He sees et arl so plainly as he saw et long ago.

Drake he was a Devon man, an' rüled the Devon seas,
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?)
Rovin' tho' his death fell, he went wi' heart at ease,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.
"Take my drum to England, hang et by the shore,
Strike et when your powder's runnin' low;
If the Dons sight Devon, I'll quit the port o' Heaven,
An' drum them up the Channel as we drumm'd them long ago."

Drake he's in his hammock till the great Armadas come,
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?)
Slung atween the round shot, listenin' for the drum,
An' dreamin arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.

Call him on the deep sea, call him up the Sound,
  Call him when ye sail to meet the foe;
Where the old trade's plyin' an' the old flag flyin'
  They shall find him ware an' wakin', as they
    found him long ago!

Sir Henry Newbolt.

CCX

THE SOLDIER

If I should die, think only this of me:
That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is for ever England. There shall be
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England's, breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England
    given;
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

Rupert Brooke.

CCXI

ST. GEORGE'S DAY—YPRES 1915

To fill the gap, to bear the brunt
With bayonet and with spade,
Four hundred to a four-mile front
Unbacked and undismayed—
What men are these, of what great race,
From what old shire or town,
That run with such goodwill to face
Death on a Flemish down?

Let be! they bind a broken line:
As men die, so die they.
Land of the free! their life was thine,
It is St. George's Day.

Yet say whose ardour bids them stand
At bay by yonder bank,
Where a boy's voice and a boy's hand
Close up the quivering rank,
Who under those all-shattering skies
Plays out his captain's part
With the last darkness in his eyes
And *Domum* in his heart?

Let be, let be! in yonder line
All names are burned away.
Land of his love! the fame be thine,
It is St. George's Day.

Sir Henry Newbolt.

CCXII

FULFILMENT

Was there love once? I have forgotten her.
  Was there grief once? grief yet is mine.
Other loves I have, men rough, but men who stir
  More grief, more joy, than love of thee and thine.

Faces cheerful, full of whimsical mirth,
  Lined by the wind, burned by the sun;
Bodies enraptured by the abounding earth,
  As whose children we are brethren: one.

And any moment may descend hot death
  To shatter limbs! pulp, tear, blast
Beloved soldiers who love rough life and breath
  Not less for dying faithful to the last.

O the fading eyes, the grimed face turned bony,
  Oped mouth gushing, fallen head,
Lessening pressure of a hand shrunk, clammed, and stony!
  O sudden spasm, release of the dead!

Was there love once? I have forgotten her.
  Was there grief once? grief yet is mine.
O loved, living, dying, heroic soldier,
  All, all, my joy, my grief, my love, are thine!

Robert Nichols.

CCXIII

THE DEAD

Blow out, you bugles, over the rich Dead!
There's none of these so lonely and poor of old,
But, dying, has made us rarer gifts than gold.
These laid the world away; poured out the red
Sweet wine of youth; gave up the years to be
Of work and joy, and that unhoped serene,
That men call age; and those who would have been,
Their sons, they gave, their immortality.

Blow, bugles, blow! They brought us, for our dearth,
Holiness, lacked so long, and Love, and Pain.
Honour has come back, as a king, to earth,
And paid his subjects with a royal wage;
And Nobleness walks in our ways again;
And we have come into our heritage.

Rupert Brooke.

CCXIV

ANTHEM FOR DOOMED YOUTH

What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?
Only the monstrous anger of the guns.
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle
Can patter out their hasty orisons.

No mockeries for them; no prayers nor bells,
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs,—
The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;
And bugles calling for them from sad shires.

What candles may be held to speed them all?
Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes
Shall shine the holy glimmers of good-byes.
The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;
Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,
And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.

Wilfred Owen.

CCXV

REBIRTH

1914-18.

If any God should say
"I will restore
The world her yesterday
Whole as before
My Judgments blasted it"—who would not lift
Heart, eye, and hand in passion o'er the gift?

If any God should will
To wipe from mind
The memory of this ill
Which is mankind
In soul and substance now—who would not bless
Even to tears His loving-tenderness?

If any God should give
  Us leave to fly
These present deaths we live,
  And safely die
In those lost lives we lived ere we were born—
What man but would not laugh the excuse to scorn?

For we are what we are—
  So broke to blood
And the strict works of war—
  So long subdued
To sacrifice, that threadbare Death commands
Hardly observance at our busier hands.

Yet we were what we were,
  And, fashioned so,
It pleases us to stare
  At the far show
Of unbelievable years and shapes that flit,
In our own likeness, on the edge of it.

Rudyard Kipling.

CCXVI

IN TIME OF

"THE BREAKING OF NATIONS"

Only a man harrowing clods
  In a slow silent walk
With an old horse that stumbles and nods
  Half asleep as they stalk.

Only thin smoke without flame
From the heaps of couch-grass;
Yet this will go onward the same
Though Dynasties pass.

Yonder a maid and her wight
Come whispering by:
War's annals will cloud into night
Ere their story die.

Thomas Hardy.

CCXVII

EVERYONE SANG

Everyone suddenly burst out singing;
And I was filled with such delight
As prisoned birds must find in freedom
Winging wildly across the white
Orchards and dark green fields; on; on; and out of sight.

Everyone's voice was suddenly lifted,
And beauty came like the setting sun.
My heart was shaken with tears, and horror
Drifted away . . . O but everyone
Was a bird; and the song was wordless; the singing will never be done.

Siegfried Sassoon.

CCXVIII

THE LITTLE THINGS

The little things, the little restless things,
The base and barren things, the things that spite
The day, and trail processions through the night
Of sad remembrances and questionings;
The poverties, stupidities and stings,
The silted misery, the hovering blight;
The things that block the paths of sound and sight;
The things that snare one's thought and break
its wings—

How shall we bear these?—we who suffer so
The shattering sacrifice, the huge despair,
The terrors loosed like lightnings on the air,
To leave all nature blackened from that curse!
The big things are the enemies we know,
The little things the traitors. Which are worse?

Gerald Gould.

CCXIX

THE HAWK

Thou dost not fly, thou art not perched,
The air is all around:
What is it that can keep thee set,
From falling to the ground?
The concentration of thy mind
Supports thee in the air;
As thou dost watch the small young birds
With such a deadly care.

My mind has such a hawk as thou,
It is an evil mood;
It comes when there's no cause for grief,
And on my joys doth brood.
Then do I see my life in parts;
The earth receives my bones,
The common air absorbs my mind—
It knows not flowers from stones.

William Henry Davies.

CCXX

THE TREE

This is the living thing that cannot stir.
Where the seed chances there it roots and grows,
To suck what makes the lily or the fir
Out of the earth and from the air that blows.
Great power of Will that little thing the seed
Has, all alone in earth, to plan the tree,
And, though the mud oppresses, to succeed
And put out branches where the birds may be.
Then the wind blows it, but the bending boughs
Exult like billows, and their million green
Drink the all-living sunlight in carouse,
Like dainty harts where forest wells are clean,
While it, the central plant, which looks o'er miles,
Draws milk from the earth's breast, and sways,
and smiles.

John Masefield.

CCXXI

O DREAMY, GLOOMY, FRIENDLY TREES

O DREAMY, gloomy, friendly Trees,
I came along your narrow track
To bring my gifts unto your knees
And gifts did you give back;
For when I brought this heart that burns—
These thoughts that bitterly repine—
And laid them here among the ferns
And the hum of boughs divine,
Ye, vastest breathers of the air,
Shook down with slow and mighty poise
Your coolness on the human care,
Your wonder on its toys,
Your greenness on the heart's despair,
Your darkness on its noise.

Herbert Trench.

CCXXII

THE CELL

WHEN from the hush of this cool wood
I go, Lord, to the noisy mart,
Give me among the multitude,
I pray, a lonely heart.

Yes, build in me a secret cell
Where quietness shall be a song:
In that green solitude I'll dwell,
And praise Thee all day long.

George Rostrevor Hamilton.

CCXXIII

AMENDS TO NATURE

I HAVE loved colours, and not flowers;
Their motion, not the swallow's wings;
And wasted more than half my hours
Without the comradeship of things.

How is it, now, that I can see,
With love and wonder and delight,
The children of the hedge and tree,
The little lords of day and night?

How is it that I see the roads,
No longer with usurping eyes,
A twilight meeting-place for toads,
A mid-day mart for butterflies?

I feel, in every midge that hums,
Life, fugitive and infinite,
And suddenly the world becomes
A part of me and I of it.

Arthur Symons.

CCXXIV

A THOUGHT

WHEN I look into a glass,
Myself's my only care;
But I look into a pool
For all the wonders there.

When I look into a glass,
I see a fool:
But I see a wise man
When I look into a pool.

William Henry Davies.

CCXXV

INITIATION

The wind has fallen asleep; the bough that tost
Is quiet; the warm sun's gone; the wide light
Sinks and is almost lost;
Yet the April day glows on within my mind
Happy as the white buds in the blue air,
A thousand buds that shone on waves of wind.
Now evening leads me wooingly apart.
The young wood draws me down these shelving ways
Deeper, as if it drew me to its heart.

What stills my spirit? What awaits me here?
So motionless the budded hazels spring,
So shadowy and so near!
My feet make not a sound upon this moss,—
Greenest gloom, scented with cold primroses.
A ripple, shy as almost to be mute,
Secretly wanders among further trees;
Else the clear evening brims with loneliness,
With stillness luminous and absolute.

The pause between sunsetting and moonrise
Exhales a strangeness. It melts out in dream
The experience of the wise.
This purity of sharpened sweet spring smells
Comes like a memory lost since I was born.
My own heart changes into mystery!
There is some presence nears through all these spells
Out of the darkened bosom of the earth:
Not I the leaf, but the leaf touches me.

Who seeks me? What shy lover, whose approach
Makes spiritual the white flowers on the thorn?
Who seems to breathe up round me,—perfume strange!—
June and its bloom unborn?
Shy as a virgin passion is the spring!
I could have Time cease now, so there should live
This blossom in the stillness of my heart,—
Earth's earth, yet immaterial as a sense
Enriched to understand, love, hope, forgive.

Now, now, if ever, could the spirit catch,
Beyond the ear's range, thrills of airy sound.
I tremble, as at the lifting of a latch.
Am I not found?
This magical clear moment in the dusk
Is like a crystal dewy-brimming bowl
Imperilled upon lifting hands: I dread
The breathing of the shadow that shall spill
This wonder, and with it my very soul.

A dead bough cracks under my foot! The charm
Breaks; I am I now, in a gloom aware
Of furtive, flitting wing, and hunted eyes,
And furry feet a-scare.
Fear, it is fear exiles us each apart;
We are all bound and prisoned in our fear;
From the dark shadow of our own selves we flee.
Ah, but that moment, open-eyed, erect,
I had stept out of all fear, and was free.

How sweet it was in youth's shy giving-time
Finding the sudden friend, whose thoughts ran out
With yours in natural chime;
Who knew, before speech, what the lips would tell!
No need to excuse, to hide or to defend
From him, in whom your dearest thought shone
new
And not a fancy stirred for him in vain.
So was it, as with a so perfect friend,
In that rare moment I have lost again.

But lo, a whiteness risen beyond the hill:
The moon-dawn! A late bird sings somewhere;
hark
The long, low, loitering trill!
Like water-drops it falls into the dark.
The earth-sweetness holds me in its fragrant mesh.
Oh, though I know that I am bound afar,
Yet, where the grass is, there I also grew.
Blood knows more than the brain. Am I perhaps
Most true to earth when I seem most untrue?

Laurence Binyon.

CCXXVI

THE NEW HOUSE

Now first, as I shut the door,
I was alone
In the new house; and the wind
Began to moan.

Old at once was the house,
And I was old;
My ears were teased with the dread
Of what was foretold;

Nights of storm, days of mist, without end;
Sad days when the sun
Shone in vain: old griefs and griefs
Not yet begun.

All was foretold me; naught
Could I foresee;
But I learnt how the wind would sound
After these things should be.

Edward Thomas.

CCXXVII

WINTER NIGHTFALL

The old yellow stucco
Of the time of the Regent
Is flaking and peeling:
The rows of square windows
In the straight yellow building
Are empty and still;

And the dusty dark evergreen
Guarding the wicket
Are draped with wet cobwebs,
And above this poor wilderness
Toneless and sombre
    Is the flat of the hill.

They said that a colonel
Who long ago died here
Was the last one to live here:
An old retired colonel,
Some Fraser or Murray,
    I don't know his name;
Death came here and summoned him,
And the shells of him vanished
Beyond all speculation;
And silence resumed here,
Silence and emptiness,
    And nobody came.

Was it wet when he lived here,
Were the skies dun and hurrying,
Was the rain so irresolute?
Did he watch the night coming,
Did he shiver at nightfall
    Before he was dead?
Did the wind go so creepily,
Chilly and puffing,
With drops of cold rain in it?
Was the hill's lifted shoulder
So lowering and menacing,
    So dark and so dread?

Did he turn through his doorway
And go to his study,
And light many candles?
And fold in the shutters,
And heap up the fireplace
To fight off the damps?
And muse on his boyhood,
And wonder if India
Ever was real?
And shut out the loneliness
With pig-sticking memoirs
And collections of stamps?

Perhaps. But he's gone now,
He and his furniture
Dispersed now for ever;
And the last of his trophies,
Antlers and photographs,
Heaven knows where.
And there's grass in his gateway,
Grass on his footpath,
Grass on his doorstep;
The garden's grown over,
The well-chain is broken,
The windows are bare.

And I leave him behind me,
For the straggling, discoloured
Rags of the daylight,
And hills and stone walls
And a rick long forgotten
Of blackening hay:

The road pale and sticky,
And cart-ruts and nail-marks,
And wind-ruffled puddles,
And the slop of my footsteps
In this desolate country's
Cadaverous clay.

J. C. Squire.

CCXXVIII

THE BARN

Rain-sunken roof, grown green and thin
For sparrows' nests and starlings' nests;
Dishevelled eaves; unwieldy doors,
Cracked rusty pump, and oaken floors,
And idly-pencilled names and jests
Upon the posts within.

The light pales at the spider's lust,
The wind tangs through the shattered pane:
An empty hop-poke spreads across
The gaping frame to mend the loss
And keeps out sun as well as rain,
Mildewed with clammy dust.

The smell of apples stored in hay
And homely cattle-cake is there.
Use and disuse have come to terms,
The walls are hollowed out by worms,
But men's feet keep the mid-floor bare
And free from worse decay.

All merry noise of hens astir
Or sparrows squabbling on the roof
Comes to the barn's broad open door;
You hear upon the stable floor
Old hungry Dapple strike his hoof,
And the blue fan-tail's whir.

The barn is old, and very old,
But not a place of spectral fear.
Cobwebs and dust and speckling sun
Come to old buildings every one.
Long since they made their dwelling here,
And here you may behold

Nothing but simple wane and change;
Your tread will wake no ghost, your voice
Will fall on silence undeterred.
No phantom wailing will be heard,
Only the farm's blithe cheerful noise;
The barn is old, not strange.

Edmund Blunden.

CCXXIX

ON A DEAD CHILD

Perfect little body, without fault or stain on thee,
With promise of strength and manhood full and fair!
Though cold and stark and bare,
The bloom and the charm of life doth awhile remain on thee.

Thy mother's treasure wert thou;—alas! no longer
To visit her heart with wondrous joy; to be
Thy father's pride;—ah, he
Must gather his faith together, and his strength
make stronger.

To me, as I move thee now in the last duty,
Dost thou with a turn or gesture anon respond;
Startling my fancy fond
With a chance attitude of the head, a freak of
beauty.

Thy hand clasps, as 'twas wont, my finger, and
holds it:
But the grasp is the clasp of Death, heart-
breaking and stiff;
Yet feels to my hand as if
'Twas still thy will, thy pleasure and trust that
enfolds it.

So I lay thee there, thy sunken eyelids closing—
Go lie thou there in thy coffin, thy last little
bed!—
Propping thy wise, sad head,
Thy firm, pale hands across thy chest disposing.

So quiet! doth the change content thee?—Death,
whither hath he taken thee?
To a world, do I think, that rights the disaster
of this?
The vision of which I miss,
Who weep for the body, and wish but to warm
thee and awaken thee?

Ah! little at best can all our hopes avail us
To lift this sorrow, or cheer us, when in the dark,
Unwilling, alone we embark,
And the things we have seen and have known and have heard of, fail us.

Robert Bridges.

CCXXX

BURY HER AT EVEN

Bury her at even
That the stars may shine
Soon above her,
And the dews of twilight cover;
Bury her at even
Ye that love her.

Bury her at even
In the wind's decline;
Night receive her
Where no voice can ever grieve her!
Bury her at even,
And then leave her!

Michael Field.

CCXXXI

GREAT THINGS

Sweet cyder is a great thing,
A great thing to me,
Spinning down to Weymouth town
By Ridgway thirstily,

And maid and mistress summoning
  Who tend the hostelry:
O cyder is a great thing,
  A great thing to me!

The dance it is a great thing,
  A great thing to me,
With candles lit and partners fit
  For night-long revelry;
And going home when day-dawning
  Peeps pale upon the lea:
O dancing is a great thing,
  A great thing to me!

Love is, yea, a great thing,
  A great thing to me,
When, having drawn across the lawn
  In darkness silently,
A figure flits like one a-wing
  Out from the nearest tree:
O love is, yes, a great thing,
  A great thing to me!

Will these be always great things,
  Great things to me? . . .
Let it befall that One will call,
  "Soul, I have need of thee":
What then? Joy-jaunts, impassioned flings,
  Love, and its ecstasy,
Will always have been great things,
  Great things to me!

Thomas Hardy.

CCXXXII

THE OXEN

CHRISTMAS Eve, and twelve of the clock.
"Now they are all on their knees,"
An elder said as we sat in a flock
By the embers in hearthside ease.

We pictured the meek mild creatures where
They dwelt in their strawy pen,
Nor did it occur to one of us there
To doubt they were kneeling then.

So fair a fancy few would weave
In these years! Yet, I feel,
If some one said on Christmas Eve,
"Come; see the oxen kneel

"In the lonely barton by yonder coomb
Our childhood used to know,"
I should go with him in the gloom,
Hoping it might be so.

Thomas Hardy.

CCXXXIII

NOEL

A FROSTY Christmas eve
when the stars were shining
Fared I forth alone
where westward falls the hill,

And from many a village
in the water'd valley
Distant music reach'd me,
peals of bells a-ringing:
The constellated sounds
ran sprinkling on earth's floor
As the dark vault above
with stars was spangled o'er.

Then sped my thought to keep
that first Christmas of all
When the shepherds watching
by their folds ere the dawn
Heard music in the fields
and marveling could not tell
Whether it were angels
or the bright stars singing.

Now blessed be the tow'rs
that crown England so fair,
That stand up strong in prayer
unto God for our souls:
Blessed be their founders
(sed I) an' our country folk
Who are ringing for Christ
in the belfries to-night
With arms lifted to clutch
the rattling ropes that race
Into the dark above
and the mad romping din.

But to me heard afar
it was heav'nly music,
Angels' song comforting
as the comfort of Christ
When he spake tenderly
to his sorrowful flock:
The old words came to me
by the riches of time
Mellow'd and transfigured
as I stood on the hill
Heark'ning in the aspect
of th' eternal silence.

Robert Bridges.

CCXXXIV

REQUIEM

Under the wide and starry sky,
Dig the grave and let me lie,
Glad did I live and gladly die
And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you grave for me:
Here he lies where he longed to be;
Home is the sailor, home from sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.

Robert Louis Stevenson.

CCXXXV

SACRAMENTUM SUPREMUM

Ye that with me have fought and failed and fought
To the last desperate trench of battle's crest,
Not yet to sleep, not yet; our work is nought;
On that last trench the fate of all may rest,
Draw near, my friends; and let your thoughts be high;
Great hearts are glad when it is time to give;
Life is no life to him that dares not die,
And death no death to him that dares to live.

Draw near together; none be last or first;
We are no longer names, but one desire;
With the same burning of the soul we thirst,
And the same wine to-night shall quench our fire.
Drink! to our fathers who begot us men,
To the dead voices that are never dumb;
Then to the land of all our loves, and then
To the long parting, and the age to come.

Sir Henry Newbolt.

CCXXXVI

THE PLOUGHER

Sunset and silence! A man: around him earth savage, earth broken;
Beside him two horses—a plough!

Earth savage, earth broken, the brutes, the dawn, man there in the sunset,
And the Plough that is twin to the Sword, that is founder of Cities!

"Brute-tamer, plough-maker, earth-breaker! Can'st hear? There are ages between us.
Is it praying you are as you stand there alone in the sunset?

"Surely our sky-born gods can be naught to you, earth-child and earth-master?
Surely your thoughts are of Pan, or of Wotan, or Dana?

"Yet why give thought to gods? Has Pan led your brutes where they stumble?
Has Dana numbed pain of the child-bed, or Wotan put hands to your plough?

"What matter your foolish reply! O man, standing lone and bowed earthward,
Your task is a day near its close. Give thanks to the night-giving God."

Slowly the darkness falls, the broken lands blend with the savage;
The brute-tamer stands by the brutes, a head's breadth only above them.

A head's breadth? Ay, but therein is hell's depth, and the height up to heaven,
And the thrones of the gods and their halls, their chariots, purples, and splendours.

Padraic Colum.

CCXXXVII

TRUTH

THE hero first thought it—
To him 'twas a deed:
To those who retaught it,
A chain on their speed.

The fire that we kindled,
A beacon by night,
When darkness has dwindled
Grows pale in the light.

For life has no glory
Stays long in one dwelling,
And time has no story
That's true twice in telling.

And only the teaching
That never was spoken
Is worthy thy reaching,
The fountain unbroken.

George Russell (*A. E.*).

CCXXXVIII

EPILOGUE

WHAT shall we do for Love these days?
How shall we make an altar-blaze
To smite the horny eyes of men
With the renown of our Heaven,

And to the unbelievers prove
Our service to our dear god, Love?
What torches shall we lift above
The crowd that pushes through the mire,
To amaze the dark heads with strange fire?
I should think I were much to blame,
If never I held some fragrant flame
Above the noises of the world,
And openly 'mid men's hurrying stares,
Worshipt before the sacred fears
That are like flashing curtains furl'd
Across the presence of our lord Love.
Nay, would that I could fill the gaze
Of the whole earth with some great praise
Made in a marvel for men's eyes,
Some tower of glittering masonries,
Therein such a spirit flourishing
Men should see what my heart can sing:
All that Love hath done to me
Built into stone, a visible glee;
Marble carried to gleaming height
As moved aloft by inward delight;
Not as with toil of chisels hewn,
But seeming poised in a mighty tune.
For of all those who have been known
To lodge with our kind host, the sun,
I envy one for just one thing:
In Cordova of the Moors
There dwelt a passion-minded King,
Who set great bands of marble-hewers
To fashion his heart's thanksgiving
In a tall palace, shapen so
All the wondering world might know

The joy he had of his Moorish lass.
His love, that brighter and larger was
Than the starry places, into firm stone
He sent, as if the stone were glass
Fired and into beauty blown.
  Solemn and invented gravely
In its bulk the fabric stood,
Even as Love, that trusteth bravely
In its own exceeding good
To be better than the waste
Of time's devices; grandly spaced
Seriously the fabric stood.
But over it all a pleasure went
Of carven delicate ornament,
Wreathing up like ravishment,
Mentioning in sculptures twined
The blitheness Love hath in his mind;
And like delighted senses were
The windows, and the columns there
Made the following sight to ache
As the heart that did them make.
Well I can see that shining song
Flowering there, the upward throng
Of porches, pillars, and windowed walls,
Spires like piercing panpipe calls,
Up to the roof's snow-cloud flight;
All glancing in the Spanish light
White as water of arctic tides,
Save an amber dazzle on sunny sides.
You had said, the radiant sheen
Of that palace might have been
A young god's fantasy, ere he came
His serious worlds and suns to frame;

Such an immortal passion
Quivered among the slim hewn stone.
And in the nights it seemed a jar
Cut in the substance of a star,
Wherein a wine, that will be poured
Some time for feasting Heaven, was stored.
But within this fretted shell,
The wonder of Love made visible,
The King a private gentle mood
There placed, of pleasant quietude.
For right amidst there was a court,
Where always muskèd silences
Listened to water and to trees;
And herbage of all fragrant sort,—
Lavender, lad's-love, rosemary,
Basil, tansy, centaury,—
Was the grass of that orchard, hid
Love's amazements all amid.
Jarring the air with rumour cool,
Small fountains played into a pool
With sound as soft as the barley's hiss
When its beard just sprouting is;
Whence a young stream, that trod on moss,
Prettily rimpled the court across.
And in the pool's clear idleness,
Moving like dreams through happiness,
Shoals of small bright fishes were;
In and out weed-thickets bent
Perch and carp, and sauntering went
With mounching jaws and eyes a-stare;
Or on a lotus leaf would crawl
A brinded loach to bask and sprawl,
Tasting the warm sun ere it dipt

Into the water; but quick as fear
Back his shining brown head slipt
To crouch on the gravel of his lair,
Where the cooled sunbeams broke in wrack,
Spilt shatter'd gold about his back.
So within that green-veiled air,
Within that white-walled quiet, where
Innocent water thought aloud,—
Childish prattle that must make
The wise sunlight with laughter shake
On the leafage overbowed,—
Often the King and his love-lass
Let the delicious hours pass.
All the outer world could see
Graved and sawn amazingly
Their love's delighted riotise,
Fixt in marble for all men's eyes;
But only these twain could abide
In the cool peace that withinside
Thrilling desire and passion dwelt;
They only knew the still meaning spelt
By Love's flaming script, which is
God's word written in ecstasies.
And where is now that palace gone,
All the magical skill'd stone,
All the dreaming towers wrought
By Love as if no more than thought
The unresisting marble was?
How could such a wonder pass?
Ah, it was but built in vain
Against the stupid horns of Rome,
That pusht down into the common loam
The loveliness that shone in Spain.

But we have raised it up again!
A loftier palace, fairer far,
Is ours, and one that fears no war.
Safe in marvellous walls we are;
Wondering sense like builded fires,
High amazements of desires,
Delight and certainty of love,
Closing around, roofing above
Our unapproacht and perfect hour
Within the splendours of Love's power.

Lascelles Abercrombie.

CCXXXIX

THE RABBI'S SONG

If Thought can reach to Heaven,
On Heaven let it dwell,
For fear thy Thought be given
Like power to reach to Hell.
For fear the desolation
And darkness of thy mind
Perplex an habitation
Which thou hast left behind.

Let nothing linger after—
No whimpering ghost remain,
In wall, or beam, or rafter,
Of any hate or pain.
Cleanse and call home thy spirit,
Deny her leave to cast,
On aught thy heirs inherit,
The shadow of her past.

For think, in all thy sadness,
  What road our griefs may take;
Whose brain reflect our madness,
  Or whom our terrors shake.
For think, lest any languish
  By cause of thy distress—
The arrows of our anguish
  Fly farther than we guess.

Our lives, our tears, as water,
  Are spilled upon the ground;
God giveth no man quarter,
  Yet God a means hath found,
Though faith and hope have vanished,
  And even love grows dim—
A means whereby His banished
  Be not expelled from Him.

Rudyard Kipling.

CCXL

"IN NO STRANGE LAND"

O WORLD invisible, we view thee,
O world intangible, we touch thee,
O world unknowable, we know thee,
Inapprehensible, we clutch thee!

Does the fish soar to find the ocean,
The eagle plunge to find the air—
That we ask of the stars in motion
If they have rumour of thee there?

Not where the wheeling systems darken,
And our benumbed conceiving soars!—
The drift of pinions, would we hearken,
Beats at our own clay-shuttered doors.

The angels keep their ancient places;—
Turn but a stone, and start a wing!
'Tis ye, 'tis your estrangèd faces,
That miss the many-splendoured thing.

But (when so sad thou canst not sadder)
Cry;—and upon thy so sore loss
Shall shine the traffic of Jacob's ladder
Pitched betwixt Heaven and Charing Cross.

Yea, in the night, my Soul, my daughter,
Cry,—clinging Heaven by the hems;
And lo, Christ walking on the water
Not of Genesareth, but Thames!

Francis Thompson.

CCXLI

THE SONG OF HONOUR

I CLIMBED a hill as light fell short,
And rooks came home in scramble sort,
And filled the trees and flapped and fought
And sang themselves to sleep;
An owl from nowhere with no sound
Swung by and soon was nowhere found,
I heard him calling half-way round,
Holloing loud and deep;

A pair of stars, faint pins of light,
Then many a star, sailed into sight,
And all the stars, the flower of night,
Were round me at a leap;
To tell how still the valleys lay
I heard a watchdog miles away,
And bells of distant sheep.

I heard no more of bird or bell,
The mastiff in a slumber fell,
I stared into the sky,
As wondering men have always done
Since beauty and the stars were one,
Though none so hard as I.

It seemed, so still the valleys were,
As if the whole world knelt at prayer,
Save me and me alone;
So pure and wide that silence was
I feared to bend a blade of grass,
And there I stood like stone.

There, sharp and sudden, there I heard—
Ah! some wild lovesick singing bird
Woke singing in the trees?
The nightingale and babble-wren
Were in the English greenwood then,
And you heard one of these?

The babble-wren and nightingale
Sang in the Abyssinian vale
That season of the year!
Yet, true enough, I heard them plain,
I heard them both again, again,

As sharp and sweet and clear
As if the Abyssinian tree
Had thrust a bough across the sea,
Had thrust a bough across to me
With music for my ear!

I heard them both, and oh! I heard
The song of every singing bird
That sings beneath the sky,
And with the song of lark and wren
The song of mountains, moths and men
And seas and rainbows vie!

I heard the universal choir,
The Sons of Light exalt their Sire
With universal song,
Earth's lowliest and loudest notes,
Her million times ten million throats
Exalt Him loud and long,
And lips and lungs and tongues of Grace
From every part and every place
Within the shining of His face,
The universal throng.

I heard the hymn of being sound
From every well of honour found
In human sense and soul:
The song of poets when they write
The testament of Beautysprite
Upon a flying scroll,
The song of painters when they take
A burning brush for Beauty's sake
And limn her features whole—

The song of men divinely wise
Who look and see in starry skies
Not stars so much as robins' eyes,
And when these pale away
Hear flocks of shiny pleiades
Among the plums and apple trees
Sing in the summer day—

The song of all both high and low
To some blest vision true,
The song of beggars when they throw
The crust of pity all men owe
To hungry sparrows in the snow,
Old beggars hungry too—
The song of kings of kingdoms when
They rise above their fortune Men,
And crown themselves anew—

The song of courage, heart and will
And gladness in a fight,
Of men who face a hopeless hill
With sparking and delight,
The bells and bells of song that ring
Round banners of a cause or king
From armies bleeding white—

The song of sailors every one
When monstrous tide and tempest run
At ships like bulls at red,
When stately ships are twirled and spun
Like whipping tops and help there's none
And mighty ships ten thousand ton
Go down like lumps of lead—

And song of fighters stern as they
At odds with fortune night and day,
Crammed up in cities grim and grey
As thick as bees in hives,
Hosannas of a lowly throng
Who sing unconscious of their song,
Whose lips are in their lives—

And song of some at holy war
With spells and ghouls more dread by far
Than deadly seas and cities are
Or hordes of quarrelling kings—
The song of fighters great and small,
The song of pretty fighters all
And high heroic things—

The song of lovers—who knows how
Twitched up from place and time
Upon a sigh, a blush, a vow,
A curve or hue of cheek or brow,
Borne up and off from here and now
Into the void sublime!

And crying loves and passions still
In every key from soft to shrill
And numbers never done,
Dog-loyalties to faith and friend,
And loves like Ruth's of old no end,
And intermission none—

And burst on burst for beauty and
For numbers not behind,
From men whose love of motherland
Is like a dog's for one dear hand,

Sole, selfless, boundless, blind—
And song of some with hearts beside
For men and sorrows far and wide,
Who watch the world with pity and pride
And warm to all mankind—

And endless joyous music rise
From children at their play,
And endless soaring lullabies
From happy, happy mothers' eyes,
And answering crows and baby-cries,
How many who shall say!
And many a song as wondrous well
With pangs and sweets intolerable
From lonely hearts too grey to tell,
God knows how utter grey!
And song from many a house of care
When pain has forced a footing there
And there's a Darkness on the stair
Will not be turned away—
And song—that song whose singers come
With old kind tales of pity from
The Great Compassion's lips,
That make the bells of Heaven to peal
Round pillows frosty with the feel
Of Death's cold finger tips—

The song of men all sorts and kinds,
As many tempers, moods and minds
As leaves are on a tree,
As many faiths and castes and creeds,
As many human bloods and breeds,
As in the world may be;

The song of each and all who gaze
On Beauty in her naked blaze,
Or see her dimly in a haze,
Or get her light in fitful rays
And tiniest needles even,
The song of all not wholly dark,
Not wholly sunk in stupor stark
Too deep for groping Heaven—
And alleluias sweet and clear
And wild with beauty men mishear,
From choirs of song as near and dear
To Paradise as they,
The everlasting pipe and flute
Of wind and sea and bird and brute,
And lips deaf men imagine mute
In wood and stone and clay:

The music of a lion strong
That shakes a hill a whole night long,
A hill as loud as he,
The twitter of a mouse among
Melodious greenery,
The ruby's and the rainbow's song,
The nightingale's—all three,
The song of life that wells and flows
From every leopard, lark and rose
And everything that gleams or goes
Lack-lustre in the sea.

I heard it all, each, every note
Of every lung and tongue and throat,
Ay, every rhythm and rhyme
Of everything that lives and loves

And upward, ever upward moves
From lowly to sublime!
Earth's multitudinous Sons of Light,
I heard them lift their lyric might
With each and every chanting sprite
That lit the sky that wondrous night
As far as eye could climb!

I heard it all, I heard the whole
Harmonious hymn of being roll
Up through the chapel of my soul
And at the altar die,
And in the awful quiet then
Myself I heard, Amen, Amen,
Amen I heard me cry!
I heard it all and then although
I caught my flying senses, Oh,
A dizzy man was I!
I stood and stared; the sky was lit,
The sky was stars all over it,
I stood, I knew not why,
Without a wish, without a will,
I stood upon that silent hill
And stared into the sky until
My eyes were blind with stars and still
I stared into the sky.

Ralph Hodgson.

NOTES

BOOK I

PAGE.	NO.	
3	I.	From *Nepenthe,* privately printed in or about 1839; a strange and difficult poem, rich in imaginative splendours. It was reprinted in 1897 by the late R. A. Streatfeild from the apparently unique copy in the British Museum.
4	II.	This is the later version of the poem, published in *Poems by the Way.* An earlier version is in *The Life and Death of Jason,* with the title, "A sweet song sung not yet to any man."
17	X.	From the long dramatic lyric, *Saul.*
43	XXIII.	The first chorus of *Atalanta in Calydon.*
58	XXXIV.	From *The Triumph of Time,* the first forty stanzas of the poem being omitted. L. 1: The singer is the French troubadour Rudel, who fell in love with the Countess of Tripoli from the report of her; sailed to Syria, fell sick on the way, and saw his lady but to die in her arms.

PAGE.	NO.	
67	XL.	Last line but one. The reading in the text is that of the original version, afterwards altered (for the worse, I think) to *Where I have seen* across the twilight wave.
80	L.	Written in imitation of the Greek "Sapphic" metre, and entitled simply "Sapphics" in *Poems and Ballads.*
84	LI.	Some stanzas describing the visit to the Prisoner are omitted.
98	LVIII.	Seventh stanza. l. 2. *Hath* in the original text.
101	LX.	Quatrains 17-19 of *The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám* (version of 1859).
107	LXVI.	From *In Memoriam;* section xi.
112	LXVIII.	The story of the Scholar-Gipsy is taken from Glanvil's *Vanity of Dogmatizing,* 1661.
135	LXXIV.	The title is that of Thomson's principal poem, of which this is a section.
139	LXXVII.	Written in Dorsetshire dialect. Woak: oak; doust: dust; jay: joy; to ho vor: in anxious care for; house-riddèn: moving house; lippèns: movements of the lips.
142	LXXIX.	One stanza (the penultimate) omitted.
144	LXXX.	Dolben was only nineteen when he was drowned while bathing in the river Welland. His poems were first published by Mr. Robert Bridges, his school-friend at Eton, in 1911.

PAGE.	NO.	
153	LXXXIV.	Quatrains 72 and 73 of FitzGerald's version of Omar (1859 edition).
157	LXXXVIII.	From *Obermann Once More.* This vision of the Roman and the Eastern world after the coming of Christ is put into the mouth of "Obermann," Arnold's name for E. F. de Senancour (1770-1846), author of a book of that name.
173	C.	One of seven sonnets by the author of *Erewhon,* privately printed with "A Psalm of Montreal" in 1904.
176	CV.	From *In Memoriam;* section CXXIII.
180	CX.	The Prelude to *Songs Before Sunrise;* the first nine stanzas omitted.

BOOK II

196	CXX.	Last line. The reference is to Chaucer's Prioress' Tale of the child, murdered by Jews, who lying dead yet continued to sing the hymn "O Alma Redemptoris Mater."
199	CXXIII.	Sorley, killed in action, October 1915, at the age of twenty, was already a poet of high promise and original power.
216	CXLII.	Gerard Hopkins' poems belong strictly to Book I but were not published till 1918. Original to the point of eccentricity, he was in metre and rhythm a pioneer, to whom later verse is indirectly indebted.

PAGE.	NO.	
219	CXLVI.	I am indebted to Lady Newbolt for the complete version, here first printed, of this poem.
232	CLVI.	Flecker's career of bright promise was cut short in 1915 by his death from consumption. He had served in the Consular service at Constantinople, Smyrna, and Beyrout. *The Old Ships* appeared after his death.
256	CLXVII.	From *Diversi Colores*, printed for the author, 1891. Herbert Horne is best known by his scholarly and majestic book on Botticelli. In his younger days he wrote poetry, practised architecture and other arts, and designed founts of type for printing.
261	CLXXIV.	Michael Field was the pseudonym adopted by Katharine Harris Bradley and Edith Emma Cooper. They were aunt and niece, and present a unique example of poetic collaboration. Their chief work is a series of poetic plays. This song occurs in Act iii. Sc. 1 of *The Tragic Mary*.
266	CLXXXI.	From *Primavera*, poems by four authors, Oxford, 1890.
269	CLXXXIV.	"Baile and Aillinn were lovers, but Aengus, the Master of Love, wishing them to be happy in his own land among the dead, told to each a story of the other's death, so that their hearts were broken and they died." The musings or comments of the poet, prefacing and interrupting the story, are here omitted.

PAGE.	NO.	
275	CLXXXVI.	From *Sister Songs.*
278	CLXXXIX.	Edward Thomas, killed in the War, turned from prose to poetry late in his life, publishing his verse under the name of Edward Eastaway.
281	CXCIII.	Maurice Hewlett began as a poet and wrote much verse in later life. His poetic power is best displayed in his epic *Song of the Plow* and in *The Village Wife's Lament.*
285	CXCVII.	The text of the title is taken from Jeremiah xii. 1. Hopkins was a Jesuit priest.
292	CCIV.	Admiral Robert Blake attacked and destroyed the Spanish fleet at Santa Cruz in Teneriffe, 20th April 1657. Returning home, ill and worn out, he died at the entrance to Plymouth Sound, 7th August. The metre of the poem seems to have been suggested by the contrasted effect of alternate hexameter and iambic used by Horace in some of his odes.
307	CCXIV.	Wilfred Owen, like Edward Thomas, C. H. Sorley, and Rupert Brooke, was a victim of the War. He was killed in action, 1918.
331	CCXXXVIII.	Epilogue to *Emblems of Love.*
337	CCXL.	This poem was found among Francis Thompson's papers when he died.

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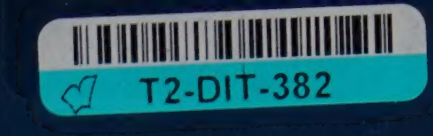
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